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THE GIFT OF
JOSHUA GREEN, M.D.,
OF GROTON, MASS.
(Class of 1818),
30 September, 1874.

Eliza Green

Eliza Grey

CHRIST OUR LAW.

BY

Mrs. CAROLINE FRY, Wilson

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'THE TABLE OF THE LORD,' &c.

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Preface. 5
INTRODUCTION - - - - - 18

CHAPTER II.

CHRIST OUR LAW:

IN HIS SOVEREIGN LOVE - - - 37

CHAPTER III.

IN HIS INCARNATION AND SUBSTITUTION - 37

CHAPTER IV.

IN HIS JUSTIFYING RIGHTEOUSNESS - - 77

CHAPTER V.

IN OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO HIM - - 94

CHAPTER VI.

IN HIS REGENERATING SPIRIT - - - 108

CHAPTER VII.

IN SAVING FAITH - - - - - 131

CHAPTER VIII.

IN THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH - - - 147

CHAPTER IX.

IN REPENTANCE UNTO LIFE - - - 162

CHAPTER X.

IN HIS SANCTIFYING GRACE - - - 184

CHAPTER XI.

IN HIS HOLY ORDINANCES - - - 214

CHAPTER XII.

IN OUR UNION AND COMMUNION WITH HIM - 250

PREFACE.

A DISTINGUISHED minister of God used to say, that a great many errors in religion have their sole origin in confusion of the intellect—in want of clearness in the understanding. I believe it is in a measure true, and I think also that this confusion, the source of so much versatility, darkness, and distress of mind, has its own origin in the want of general first principles. The elements of divine truth are often less known than its great conclusions; and we come to the study of religion as a scholar would come to the study of the classics, who had not first learned the simplest principles of grammatical construction; at a great disadvantage, to say the least. My desire in the following pages, is at once to simplify and comprehend the great first principles of the Law of God in the Gospel of Jesus Christ; to unravel, as far as I may be able, the tangled thread in which the awakened spirit finds itself involved in its researches after truth; and to draw out from the beginning to the end, the curiously wrought, but never broken tissue. I write for the simple, or such as being wise, are willing to become as little children, that they may enter into the kingdom of God: and if I can always escape being obscure, I shall not fear to be

sometimes elementary. The time seems at hand when we shall all have to retreat upon the strong holds of our faith; when they that teach, and they that learn, and they that keep the watch-tower, or go forth to the battle-field, will be compelled to do for a declining church, what for an advancing one the Apostle forbids to be done; to maintain "the principles of the doctrine of Christ," instead of going on unto perfection:" to "lay again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God:" in order to preserve and strengthen and encourage those that stand, if we may not renew again to repentance them that have fallen away. The necessity and the discouragement reach us from the same quarter: the diminished acceptance which our words will find, being an increased occasion for the repetition of them.

The smiles of an encouraging, if not a believing world, have long followed the writers and preachers of evangelical truth, making smooth and pleasant their allotted tasks. We believe that it will cease to be so: the envoys and ambassadors of the Most High will be dismissed with ignominy on the approach of war, where in a time of apparent peace, they have been fêted and applauded. This is our expectation. If it be just, the time is at hand also in which the servants of the Lord must prepare to approve themselves faithful in their changed position, must put off the soft raiment of such as are in king's houses, and gird themselves with the camels' hair and leathern girdle for the wilderness; if not with coat of mail and weapons for the conflict. Shall any be found wanting? Shall voices that in more halcyon days were heard on the Lord's side, grow now so confused and indistinct, that it cannot be known what is piped or harped? Shall trumpets that were used to echo through the camp of Israel their notes of victory or warning, give now so uncertain a sound that none shall know whether to prepare themselves for battle, for flight, or for submission? It may be so. Men

sometimes seem to want in things spiritual, the wisdom and courage that not uncommonly characterizes the children of this world in their generation. When the wind sets in, and the tide flows strong upon a rocky shore, the skilful mariner turns the vessel's head, makes for the sea, and calls all hands together to keep her off the land. Our helmsmen are doing contrariwise: they have set their sails to the wind and their head to the tide, and are doing all they can to near the fatal shore. In some instances they have gone the utmost length their principles will admit, to conform themselves to the fashion of the times, to avoid the imputation of extreme opinions, and relieve themselves of a name they would once have been ashamed to be without. Will they escape the wreck? Will they answer for the safety of those entrusted to them? It is not for me to say. "The Lord is able to make them stand." This, only for myself I am resolved upon; this only anxious about: that whether approved or disapproved, whether useful or useless, accepted or refused, I may not, at such a time as this, be by anybody *mistaken;* may not allow even a motto—no, not a *name* to be obliterated from the colours, feebly but not unstably borne among the ranks of Israel.

Entering upon a subject so deep, so sublime, so intricate, so mysterious, as the Law of Redemption, we cannot be too strongly impressed with the little that we know—the limitation as well as imperfection of our knowledge. We have to encounter things that we see darkly, and things that we cannot see at all; and these may be so nearly connected, that judgment may be at fault in the one by reason of the other. We may stretch our vision and complicate our magnifying glasses to gaze on the fore-front of some distant mountain, and become more or less firmly persuaded of what we think we see, while yet we are short of certainty. But on the reverse side of the mountain we cannot gaze at all, and no powers of vision or art of man can help us: whatever

we suppose of it must be conjecture only; whatever we know of it must be received on trust. It is a distinction I would endeavour to bear in mind throughout; for we are apt to talk a little too vaguely about *opinion*—as if all religious truths were matters of opinion, subjects of reasoning, exercises of judgment. It is not so. The most important truths of the Gospel are not opinions—they are matters of revelation, and therefore matters of fact. A positive declaration, statement, or command in the Holy Scriptures excludes opinion—forbids opinion—stamps on opinion the sin of unbelief. There are more of such things in the book of God than some people are aware of; and the 'I think,' and 'I don't think' of common talk, grates harshly sometimes on the considerate believer's ear; falls unbecomingly sometimes from the inconsiderate believer's lips. He who insists upon such truths as these, however imperatively, is not dogmatical: he who condemns all contradiction and contravention of them, is not uncharitable; while the believer who when called upon to contend for the faith, from deference to opinion concedes or compromises, or withholds these plain declarations of the word of God, is a traitor or a coward, and no true soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are other parts of revelation, of which, not being so distinctly stated, God has yet given us materials for forming an opinion; by reasoning, by analogy, by comparison with other things, and deduction from other statements. These and these only are properly matters of opinion—legitimate subjects of controversy and discussion: on which every faculty that God has given us may worthily be exercised, and may find ample exercise, for the attainment of the truth. Such attainment admits of every degree of persuasion,—to ourselves of certainty: and by the enlightening of the Holy Spirit in the exercise of a sound understanding, may amount to articles of faith as firm to our own conviction as if they were distinctly stated in the word of God. Still,

I think, such convictions should be always spoken of as opinions—fallible opinions; to be no further pressed upon others than we can give a reason for them, and communicate the ground of our persuasion: the strength of our own conviction gives us no right to dogmatize; since however wise we be,—wise men have come to opposite conclusions. I do not say we are to give up our conclusions, or even to hold them doubtfully, if we are scripturally satisfied thereof; for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; and it is very far from being true that we can repose in nothing but absolute certainty. Nevertheless all human judgments are fallible and liable to be changed; and our strongest statements should be attempered with persuasion, and borne out with argument, and submitted to proof, and held with toleration.

There is yet a third class of things which in our study of the Holy Scriptures must occur, and press themselves with no common interest upon our thoughts: but respecting which God has not only made no direct communication, but has not even supplied us with materials on which an opinion can be formed. As a mental exercise on which no faith is to be founded, or practical conclusion drawn, or established principle disturbed, I do not wish to prohibit all reflection, all conjecture, even upon these subjects: they are often deeply if not personally interesting: as for instance the judgment of the heathen; the progressive destiny of man had he not fallen, and many other things; but all our thoughts upon such subjects are conjecture, not opinion; and I think, as matters of controversy and discussion, they cannot profit them that are occupied therewith.

CHRIST OUR LAW.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

HUMAN law has its origin in aggression: in the tendency of one man's passions, interests, and pleasures to encroach on the feelings, interests, and pleasures of another: and while thus interfering, the law itself becomes in a sense aggressory; depriving men of some personal freedom and advantage for the community's sake. If we were isolated beings, walking each our own course side by side with our race, never crossing or approaching the highway of another, men would have had no occasion, and I apprehend, no right to make laws, except for their own personal guidance. As it is, so long as individual conduct has no influence on the community, and individual character no relative effects, I suppose the utmost designed benefit to the individual cannot justify compulsory interference; since no man is to that extent his brother's keeper, nor has a right to be his brother's law-giver. If I rightly understand the nature of liberty, this is its limitation: man's separate, independent, irrelative existence, is his own; upon

which all forcible intrusion, for however good a purpose, is an encroachment upon natural right: whereas all beyond it, being liable to become aggressive, is a fit subject of legal restriction and constraint. For example,—it is an extreme and yet familiar case—the man who spreads infidel opinions in a Christian community, may be fitly put to silence by human legislation; because the dissemination of such doctrines is an assault of the strong upon the weak, who claim the law's protection: of the skilful, the bold, the artful, perhaps the learned, upon ignorance, weakness, and simplicity; and there must be in every community some who are likely to be injured by the inculcation of such principles. But I conclude no human legislation has a right to go further, and insist on recantation; even to save the soul, if that would do it: all persecution and prohibition of opinion, merely as such, being an unjust aggression on natural right and liberty. With deference to the opinion of others, but no less decision in my own, I suppose that compulsory laws have the same limitation: and however good it is, for instance, for a man to go to church, or keep holy the sabbath-day, I cannot perceive that a community has any right to enforce it,—unless in doing otherwise, an individual forcibly prevents the righteous observance of others, or publicly intrudes on the devotional feelings and occupations of the community. There must be such a limitation somewhere,—because if a Christian legislature is to carry out the law of God in the fourth commandment, it may equally carry it out in the second commandment, by fine, imprisonment, and death, on all idolaters. Must we not rather conclude, that a man's responsibility to his Maker is wholly his own, until his

failure in it becomes aggressive upon the common weal? It is written "Thou shalt not steal;" "Thou shalt not covet;" and one is as adverse to the mind of God as the other: but human legislation enforces the one command and leaves the other, because, as I suppose, the powers that may be, are ordained of God for the punishment of evil doers, and the reward of them that do well,—not as sinful creatures before a holy God but as members of this world's sociality; the interference of man with man being stayed at the aggressive manifestation of the sin.

And while on the one hand human legislation may not enforce all that the law of God requires; on the other hand, the law of the land goes often beyond the law of God, requiring many things to be done and left undone, which God does not require or forbid. "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar?" "Tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom." The law of God adjusts not the dues of Cæsar; but simply enjoins submission to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, thus giving divine sanction to an extension of human authority beyond its own special enactments. Exact as the law of Moses was respecting the tribute of the temple-service, &c., it had never been written that the people should go up to be taxed of Cæsar Augustus for the support of a heathen and idolatrous empire;—but God for his people's sin, and his own purposes of mercy, had permitted Israel to become tributary to Rome, and submission to the customs of Rome had thence become their duty. By our Lord's answer to Peter, Matt. xvii. 25, we may rather suppose he did not think the exaction of the tribute-money was just and right: "Nevertheless"—instead of making,

as some Christians do, a conscientious difficulty about it, Jesus wrought a miracle to answer the demand—"lest we offend them." The Gospel rule that "no man go beyond or defraud his brother in any matter," falls as far short of the restricted and compulsory regulation of the body politic in matters of this world's commerce and exchange, as "the charity that seeketh not her own," the patience that when reviled, revileth not again, the honour that preferreth one another, and the love that is "even as I have loved you," goes beyond the power or the right of man to regulate and overrule his fellow man.

So much I have said to exhibit the essential and important difference there is, in its very nature, between divine and human legislation. The latter, however good for the community, having reference to social, not to individual well-being, is not always beneficial, and may be even injurious to some persons who owe obedience to it. The freest government on earth, does frequently prohibit what a subject might innocently and advantageously avail himself of, did it not abridge or invade the rights and advantages of other subjects; and does compel him to many things burthensome, from which no personal benefit can be derived. It is in fact aggressory; an abridgment of that essential freedom which is every man's birth-right, but which he is supposed to concede by being a member of civil society, and can only reclaim by becoming an outlaw among mankind. If we add to this the dissimilitude of the lawgivers;—how hard it is for fallible creatures, amid the conflicting elements of selfishness, prejudice, ignorance, and partiality, to hold the balance even, and adjust the rights of all; we shall perceive in how very

different a light we must behold the government of God, from that in which we view the government of man, and how much we are likely to be misled by deriving our notions of the one, from our habitual impressions of the other. So long as weakness, fallibility, and sin are bound up in the heart that guides the legislative hand, human law is not necessarily good, nor necessarily right; and however bound to submit to it as law, no one is bound to consent to it as good; or further to conform than is compulsory by the exact letter. We are free to desire, and free to endeavour, by all lawful means, to relieve ourselves from its dominion, or procure its abrogation; in doing so, we may be wisely and justly seeking our own good, and we have a perfect right to the exercise of our own judgment upon it.

Now have we not unconsciously transferred this notion of the aggressive nature of law, to the commandments of Almighty God: as if anything that He commands might be inimical to our greatest happiness, anything that He forbids might be really beneficial to us? Do we never thing of his law, as something it is fit to do because we must; but which, if we need not, it would be fit to let alone? Something we must not, because it is unlawful; but which, if we might, we should be the gainers by it? And under this impression, are we not fretting ourselves perpetually to discover the minimum of what we must, and what we may not do, as if all law whatsoever were against us?

Before we enter on our momentous subject, the Law of God in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, let us put away from us every such impression; let us forcibly rid ourselves of this habitual confusion of the mind, and fix deeply in our hearts the absolute, immutable, invari-

able *goodness* of God's government; not ultimately and generally, but for every creature in particular, at every time and under every circumstance. Do we know it? Judging by the common talk and common walk of men, we might think that nobody knows it; that even Christians learn it slowly, and perhaps too late for their progress through this world; just time enough for their translation to a world where no one doubts it; where no one supposes there is, or has been at any time or can be any where, a law of God, which to obey would not be the creature's happiness, which to depart from would not be to the creature's injury, although he were left at liberty to choose. Do we believe it? The world does not, because the world loves sin: and knows no harm in sin, but what arises from its prohibition; so that, if there were no law, there would be no transgression, or at least no evil consequences to be feared. If the people of God do indeed believe it, whence comes the never-ending, ever-failing experiment to walk to the extreme verge of that, which to be enveloped with and lost in, would be happiness entire?

We are led into error by contemplating God's government of this world as a whole: we call our earth 'the world;' our own creation the 'beginning:' we call the winding-up of human destiny the 'final end of all things?' Such language becomes the lips of humanity, because to humanity it is so; but it becomes not, and befits not the subject of which we speak; its unfitness confuses us and confounds us; and the necessity of so speaking, demands of us the most absolute submission and prostration of intellect, for all that is mysterious and unintelligible in the government of God. "It is higher than heaven, what can we know?

It is deeper than hell, what can we understand?" Adventurers once crossed the broad Atlantic, and lighting on the first promontory of an unknown island, called it "The new world." New was it in all that met the strangers' eye; its scenery, its productions, its wild inhabitants. They traversed its boundless fields, and seemingly interminable waters; they collected its treasures, and gathered of its fruits; took account of its latitude, and assigned its longitude, and mapped out its creeks and bays. But what knew they of its actual position?—of the immense continent of which it was but the mere off-set?—of the near approaches of their new world to the old one, by the other side? Nothing: and yet more, the astonished voyagers, returning from the first-discovered shores of Hispaniola, knew more of its position in the globe entire, than we know of the position of our world in God's untravelled universe; of what was before us, or what shall be after us, or what is without us and beyond us. We know by revelation, that when this island-promontory, this tiny off-set of unnumbered spheres, came first into habitable being, hosts of pre-existent creatures sang with joy over the beauties of the new-created world, and fallen beings were prepared to ruin it. We know by faith in revelation, our own beginning, its progress, and its issue; the transactions of a few thousand years in this little planet; a point in God's eternity, a speck in God's universe; but we know nothing, absolutely nothing, of its connexion with pre-existent, far-existent, non-existent worlds.

There is enough in the first thought, to deter us from any attempt to examine the purposes, and understand the government, of Almighty God. But this it must

not do. It has pleased Him even here, to us the least, perhaps the last-born of his creatures, to make a revelation of himself, which in its magnitude becomes not us, but Him: a declaration of his will, an exhibition of his attributes, a specimen, if we may so speak, of his universal legislation, for such I doubt not that it is. In the presence it may be, of all worlds; under cognizance it may be, of all creatures; for the benefit, and warning, and security perhaps of all that was before, or shall be after us, Almighty God has wrought out his purposes on earth; but he has hidden every thing from us, except what concerns ourselves. If on the one hand it becomes us to examine the government of Jehovah, as something inscrutable, incomprehensible, a mere glimpse of an indiscernible whole, seen "as through a glass, darkly;" limited by that glass's boundary, as well as obscured by its dimness, and distorted by its imperfectness: it becomes us not to doubt of what we see, because we see no more: to veil our eyes, and close our ears, and turn away incredulous from the astounding improbabilities of the law of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ. "What is man that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that Thou so regardest him?" this is God's own secret: "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth;" this is man's right position. Be sure that the more intent the ear, the more intense the gaze, the further we search into and discover of the divine plan, the greater will seem its fitness and beauty; the beneficence of the design, and adaptation of the means: the wisdom, the love, the blessedness of all that Jehovah has commanded and appointed.

Of the law of God in paradise, received in immediate communication with the Most High, or written upon

the fleshly tables of pure and guileless hearts; sinless, but capable of sin, and therefore requiring to be guided; happy, but capable of misery, and therefore requiring to be warned; we speak briefly, because the word of God is brief: less than one short chapter containing all we know of the government and condition of mankind in innocence. Dominion over the animal and material world, the prohibition of the tree of knowledge, the sanctification of the Sabbath, the law of marriage, and I think the law of labour, or at least of occupation in that blest garden, is all that is extant of the primeval code. No intimation is given of any connexion there might be between God's government of his creatures then, and their foreseen fall and foreordained redemption. It does not signify. The life of God was breathed into them: the likeness of God was stamped upon them; perhaps the immutable laws of right and wrong, as they exist in God, were known to their conscience as a rule of life. One thing is certain: Adam stood by faith and obedience, and fell by unbelief and disobedience; and since it is the only specimen we have of God's government of his creatures in a state of innocence; it is not without reason we suppose faith and obedience to be the law of universal being: the terms of universal blessedness: the immutable compact, if we may so speak, between the Creator and his creatures.

Angels broke it, and became outlaws of the universe for ever; subjected only to avenging and restraining power. Man broke it: and there ensued an entirely new state of things; a scheme of regeneration, a plan of redemption, a legislation of recovery, a law of the gospel; of which, nevertheless faith and obedience are still the fundamental principles.

But when law was first promulgated upon earth; when God commanded the man saying, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest of it, thou shalt surely die."—do we think that the grant was a blessing, and the prohibition a blot upon it? That the fruit so good to the taste, and pleasant to the eye, and competent to make wise, was really a thing to be desired by the man, the privation of which was a drawback upon his happiness? Man thought so, and Satan told him so; but what was his first experience of that coveted knowledge-giving feast? Shame, the most painful of all sensations, the first painful sensation this blessed pair had ever known. The precise nature of the knowledge thus acquired, we know not; or whether it was indeed what the poet calls it, 'Knowledge of good bought dear by knowing ill:' but ill was what they gained by it, and would have been, had the penalty annexed to disobedience never been enforced. Jehovah was in no fear to have his creature more blessed than he designed him to be, an aggressor upon his own uncommunicated life and bliss, when he said, "The man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever." The man had possessed himself of something pertaining to deity, which was not suitable to humanity, or at least not suitable then: not something which had he been unarrested in his transgression, would have put him into forcible possession of eternal independent bliss, beside the throne of God: but which might perhaps have immortalized the shame, that attended the first tasting. If Adam gained the knowledge of his own evil and his

Maker's good, if he became wise enough to discern the guilt of his own act, the rebellion, the disobedience, the ingratitude of the creature, contrasted with the goodness and love of the Creator, remorse would have consigned him to never-ending woe. Who shall say then, whether the ejection from the tree of life that followed, was an act of wrath or mercy? I am scarce afraid to say. For I am persuaded, had Adam been allowed to stay and eat of both the trees for ever, the grant would have been a perpetuity of woe: he could not have been the happy creature that he had been; he could not have been innocent again, and how could he be blest? The worm of remorse was in his bosom; the burning flush of shame was on his cheek; the one could not die, nor the other be extinguished; and what could that tree of immortality have done for him? If no flaming sword had kept the way, in what condition would unregenerate humanity have lived for ever?

We do not want to speculate upon unknown things, but we do desire to see, as far as we may see, into the loving-kindness of Him who never willed anything but his creature's happiness; and never made a law, but with intent to bless: to mitigate evil, or bring increase of good.

When the first penal law had taken its course, and man had sinned and died: when the changed and fallen creature went forth to till the ground, accursed for his sake, in sorrow to eat of it all the days of his appointed time, until his change should come; wherein the dust should return to dust, and the breath to him who breathed it, and the spoiled workmanship be made anew for a safer paradise and more glorious immortality: were not goodness and mercy in the very letter

of the curse itself, with which offended Deity sent him forth? Suppose it had stood thus: 'Let the lawless, godless being go, with death in his veins, and corruption in his heart, to run riot for a season amid the joys of time and sense: let him eat his bread unearned, and multiply his kind without sorrow on the earth, during the time of his probation: and let the tempter find him there, with nothing to remind him of God's forfeited favour and approaching judgment.' We are at no loss to guess what would have followed: how soon the past would be forgotten, and the future unfeared, and the immortal spirit sunk and buried in the gratification of the sensual appetites. The necessity to labour for existence is the greatest blessing of our temporal estate; the greatest earthly check upon unlimited licentiousness: while want and sorrow, and all that we call evil in this mortal life, are the medicaments of the Almighty to purify and restore the soul, and bring us to repentance. If thorns and briers grow upon our paths; if want follows upon idleness, and disease upon excess, and misery upon sin, is the law against us that decrees it so? I do not ask if it is unjust; we may not be disposed to question the fitness of retributive justice in a broken law; but if no such law were promulgated, if no such curse attached, while the final destiny of man is in abeyance, would God have shewn himself more merciful, more loving, more beneficent to his fallen, sinful creatures? No, certainly: unless idleness and excess, and every manner of iniquity are blessings, the penal prohibitions of God's law are not an evil. And if we look further, if we see the brier grow where we have tilled and sown, and gather thorns where we expected fruit: if the honest labourer eats his bread in scarceness,

and harmless childhood wastes in pining sickness; if 'one event happeneth to the just and to the unjust;' we ask again, what should we be without the checks, the reproofs, the warnings, the remembrancers of an adverse providence? The fruit they are indeed of sin, and product of the fall; but more pitiful to the sinful and the fallen in this probationary state, than unbroken prosperity could be. Such is the effect of sensual indulgences upon corrupted nature, such the tendency of the animal to overbear the mental and spiritual, to substitute the present for the future, and bury all in the pleasures of time and sense: without some such checks, one short sentence would comprise the history of all mankind. "I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like the green bay-tree. Yet he passed away, and lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found." If Jehovah had had no purposes of mercy towards our race, he need have laid no curse upon the earth: its godless enjoyment would have ruined all, and sin, unrestricted by hopes or fears, would have been our sufficient misery. But his gracious mind was otherwise; his delights were still with the sons of men. He had from all eternity a plan prepared to redeem his loss, to renew his fallen, to retrieve his ruined, to raise up his dead: and every law that has since been promulgated upon earth has had that end in view: threatenings, promises, rewards, and punishments, have all been designed to stay the hand of the wicked, and save his people from their sins.

Oh, if the fallen creature had but felt this, if he had liked to retain such knowledge of his Maker's goodness as remained; if he had believed, submitted, and obeyed, he might have been comparatively happy still. He is

comparatively happy still, amid all his sorrows, in proportion as he does this; in proportion as he follows the growing light of truth, which is no other than the disclosure of God's mind and will, whether moral or spiritual, for this life or the life to come; whether for distinction we call it the Law or the Gospel. It has been true from the beginning of time, and will be to the end, that "All things work together for good to them that love God."

We may not look beyond our limits,—we may not ask for the secrets of that eternal world where there is no remedy and no hope, but where all will be seen to have been just, and true, and reasonable. We can believe, we cannot otherwise than believe, that the law of the Almighty is holy, just, and good, throughout the universe, as He approves it to us here.

But we might draw a picture,—nay, we have pictures of better drawing than our own, of bliss that survived the fall. On the first transgression, reconciliation with Deity was at once proclaimed, grace began to operate, and faith began to rule; calling back to obedience the willing, believing heart, and by renewed conformity to the will of God, restoring its capability of bliss. The first fallen, were the first restored. Hardened by no habitude of sin, blinded by no long-indulged corruption, darkened by no long forgetfulness and ignorance of good,—we could fancy the pair that went forth from Eden, might be the least corrupted of their race; and altered as their condition was, if they lived in lowly obedience to as much of the law of God as their clouded intellect was capable of receiving, they might be the least unhappy; they might be as happy as the fallen nature was capable of being, amid all its toils and sorrows, in

the exercise of faith, and hope, and love. Living, as our first parents did, to gather the deadly fruits of the fast multiplying seed of evil, and witness the increase of misery and crime in their descendants; they lived also to see the goodness of God in the land of the living,—"For God hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew:" begotten indeed in the likeness of their own corrupted nature, but heir no less of the blessing of redemption, and chosen progenitor of the promised seed. Would not these, the first lost, first saved, love much for much forgiven,—and hope all things, and believe all things, and endure all things, and in pious confidence and penitent submission, during the more than nine centuries of years they lived upon the earth? We may believe so,—and under the influence of the Spirit which already strove with men, and that intercourse with God, and good angels, which was continued to them, we know not in all that length of time, how much of the defaced image of Deity might be restored; how much of the joys of holiness recovered. They who first proved that the wages of sin is death, had perhaps the first experience of heavenly wisdom, and found that "her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

Behold our second Father, Abraham,—the father of the faithful—the friend of God,—in all the wealth, and greatness, and prosperity, of patriarchal life; when the Lord had blessed him in all things, and made him a blessing wherever he sojourned, because he believed the Lord, and "it was accounted to him for righteousness." Was he not happy? Was any law of God against the believing servant who obeyed without enquiry the most inexplicable commands? "I will bless thee, and make

thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee." Commanded to slay, and if he had slain, the heir of promise, was not God able to raise him up again, even from the dead? Abraham believed so; and was only the more blest for the approval of his faith. We might pursue the story of the succeeding patriarchs, and find them only less prosperous and less happy, by so much as they were less faithful, and blameless, and obedient; but we should never find the commandments of the Lord against the welfare of his servants. And when from the kept and cared-for tents in which his name was honoured, and his presence known, we turn towards the wilderness in which He was forgotten and defied, wherein at first sight it would seem that his hand was against every man, and every man's hand against him; just vengeance superseding every thought of love: we must not be hasty to determine that it was wrath alone which drowned a world whose guilt and misery increased upon forbearance; confounded tongues that plotted only crime, and finally reduced to threescore years and ten, the life of which the length was but accumulated guilt.

Next, let us set our faces towards Gerizim, and amid the restless conflicts of a lawless world, listen to the holy sanctions of that newly-promulgated code which men still take to be against them,—the Law of the Ten Commandments; the concise embodiment, as it were, of the statutes of the Almighty,—the summary of unalterable right and wrong,—which was law before the two tables were delivered, and would be law although they ceased to be in force,—carried out, exemplified, personified, so to speak, in the teaching and in the ex-

ample of our Lord Jesus Christ; but never by one jot or one tittle altered or recalled. There is not one of those commandments, or of the Gospel construction of them, that could be recalled without detriment to the happiness of mankind, and impeachment of the tender mercies of the Lord towards his people; so holy are they, and so just and good. In the book of Deuteronomy, we may learn what man, the lost, the fallen, the ruined, the wretched, might have become by obedience to the law of Moses, had Israel kept the covenant made with them in Horeb:—"What nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous, as this law, which I set before you this day," for evil, for punishment, for privation?—that they should be more blessed without it, or we more blessed if we be relieved of it? Hear the lawgiver's own commentary—"O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep my commandments always, that it might be well with them and with their children for ever!" Would it not have been well with them? "And now, O Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee?" What did he then—what does he now—what has he ever required, since he had creatures to govern and to bless?—"but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul; to keep the commandments of the Lord and his statutes which I command thee this day, *for thy good?*" No words of our's can illuminate the pages of that book,—no change of language can add force or colouring to the deeply touching picture: the only description of felicity in this world that carries the stamp of reality upon it. From the fabled Hesperus of the heathen poet, to the

Abyssinian valley of the Christian moralist, where have we the full heart's consent that the condition, if it were not fictitious, would be bliss; except in the picture drawn by no human hand, of what the children of Abraham might have been, when Jehovah was their Lawgiver and King, had they "remembered and forgat not the things that he commanded them?" "Then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." "That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the Lord your God sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon earth." *The days of heaven upon earth*—And what could Paradise itself have been more, if Adam had stayed there? It would have been less,—for pardoning mercy and redeeming love would never have been know in it. And if this beautiful picture of mundane felicity has had no real existence *yet;* if this description which leaves all fabled imagery of bliss behind, seems itself a fable *yet*,—I believe the earth shall see it, in all the plentitude of unbroken promise and covenant fulfilled; when, Ebal withdrawn, and only Gerizim left, the law of Sinai shall be the rule of life. Meantime the fault was never in the law, as unsuited to produce the happiness annexed to it. The commandments were calculated to make men happy by obedience in their then condition; and had they kept them, the full blessing promised would have been enjoyed. They are calculated to make us happy still, though the special promises of the temporal election are no longer affixed to them as a reward; God having provided some better thing for us than mere temporal prosperity, in the present privileges and future expectations of the Gospel.

We need not change our position even in contemplation of the ceremonial law. There are some things in it of which we can trace no purpose, and others that seem burthensome and severe. The Scripture itself calls it a bondage, a yoke, a schoolmaster—something that was good to an ulterior end, but from which release was to be accepted as a blessing. I believe it was altogether special and typical; ordained for an occasion, and to an ulterior purpose; not intended or adapted to produce permanent happiness in itself. "Therefore, He gave them statutes that were not good." It was a perpetual miracle; and, as soon as the supernatural was separated from the ceremonial, these divine statutes became 'beggarly elements' and 'carnal ordinances,' that could not make happy, as they could not make holy, them that were exercised therein. While Urim and Thummin spake upon the Ephod, and the glorious Shekinah shone within the veil—while fire from heaven consumed the sacrifices, and the temple was brilliant with unearthly light; we doubt not, we cannot doubt of the mysterious charm that was in all those ordinances, and the exalted blessedness that might attend the pious and exact observance of them: when in the spirit of faith, the Jewish believer saw afar off the promised good, of which these were but the shadowy foreshowing. An awed and pensive wonder fills our minds in perusing the dedication of Solomon's temple: the pomp and splendour of the twice seven days' feast, the trumpets, and singers, and instruments of music—the twenty-and-two thousand oxen, and hundred-and-twenty thousand sheep—the fire that came down from heaven and consumed them—the glory of God that filled the house, and the mournful pathos of the darkly foreboding prayer. Contrasting the deprecatory invo-

cation of the magnificent, high-minded monarch, on a throne, from which their guilty wishes had displaced their God, with the promissory exhortation of the meek, departing prophet, on the banks of Jordan: like them of old who wept at the memory of the first temple amid the festive rejoicings for the second, we think we could have wept through all that fourteen days' feast, at thought of what our forefathers had refused. "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." Nevertheless, it is like the first going forth of Paradise; the day of redemption was in his heart, which seemed only to grow more tender, as their's became more indurated. As, after the discovery and confession of human shame, Jehovah's first act was to clothe the man's nakedness with the typical garments, and heal his soul with the promise of salvation; that he might not go naked and uncomforted out of Eden; so, now, departing from the blessedness of his government a second time refused, a provision of mercy, a parting sign of love, attends the grant of Israel's guilty choice. "Fear not; ye have done all this wickedness; yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart." "For the Lord will not forsake his people for his great Name's sake; because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people." All was indeed changed. The covenant of Mount Horeb had not been kept: the blessings had been forfeited times without number, and the curses incurred and suffered; the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments had been forgotten; they had forsaken the Lord to serve Baalim and Ashtoreth; they had made covenants with Moab, and trafficked with Baal-Peor: and they had added to their sins the greatest sin of all,

to ask for themselves a king. But the lawgiver had been the prophet also: and the law had provided, if we may so speak, for its own ill-success: the pattern was given to Moses on the Mount, of a ritual, remedial rather than probationary, prepared for the disobedient and rebellious. "A fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness;" a dispensation of repentance, expiation, and atonement: a day of rebuke and blasphemy on the one side, of enduring love and forbearance on the other.

Apart from its typical ulterior purpose of bringing in a better covenant, we doubt not that the ceremonial law was fitted to produce as much happiness in the paths of faith and obedience, as its remedial character admitted of, in the peculiar position of that beloved but rebellious house. It was a code of love, and not of vengeance, still. "He sent the people away to their tents, glad and merry in heart, for the goodness that the Lord had showed unto David and to Solomon, and to Israel his people." It is an impressive—it is an affecting moment; when, having made trial of his creatures a second time,—refused in the land of promise now, as he had been before in Eden;—the Almighty Ruler retires behind the veil, to dwell in the thick darkness of the inner sanctuary, but keeps his eye and keeps his ear attent —and leaves his name, and leaves his heart; and He who, when He would have been himself their king, proposed to open to them his good treasure, and bless all the work of their hands; precluding blight and barrenness, sickness, and mischance,—makes now a merciful provision for their altered case: pardon for the contrite, instead of blessings for the righteous; promises to repentance, instead of to conformity; remedies for sin and

sorrow, instead of security against them. "And the Lord appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice. If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; if my people which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and forgive their sin, and will heal their land. Now my eyes shall be open, and my ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place. For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever, and my eyes and my heart shall be there perpetually." A dispensation still of pardon, hope, and promise: and if they and their king whom they had desired had obeyed his voice, and walked in all the way of his commandments, would they not have been a happy people still? As happy as their day of minority and tutelage for the gospel might admit of?

Our heart fails us to proceed. It was not for the hardness and unkindness of the Levitical dispensation, nor for the failing love of the Dispenser, that they slew his prophets and stoned them that were sent, till "Having yet one son, his well-beloved, He sent him also last unto them:" and he, with wicked hands, being taken and slain, their house was left unto them desolate: and they might see their Lord no more, until "that day should come." We believe that it will come. I do not mean to dogmatise or to speculate, still less to predict, upon the time and circumstances of this last glorious coming; but I think there is a time spoken of through-

out the Holy Scripture, and by no means confined to certain mysterious passages, when the law of God in Paradise and Canaan shall be vindicated, and the blessedness of obedience be enjoyed by a renewed and recovered people, walking in the power and in the footsteps of Him who came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them;—who died, not to release mankind from painful submission to a hard, injurious rule, but to procure for them the opportunity, the power, and the will, to be perfect in happiness by perfect obedience to it: the bliss of Eden without its temptation to evil and liability to fall: the bliss of the promised land, without the indwelling corruption of the fallen nature by reason of which the milk and honey flowed in vain.

"Thus saith the Lord God; in the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities, I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden." "I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and keep my judgments, and do them." "I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better unto you than at your beginnings: and ye shall know that I am the Lord." These are God's promises. Earth and heaven must witness their fulfilment somewhere—some time; when He, now gone to receive a kingdom of the Father,—our sovereign Lord, once slain, and many times refused,—shall be put into possession of his own, and "the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ."

We have been speaking of the past, which is written

for our learning; of the future, which is told us that our joy may be full in the midst of this world's temporary tribulations. We have treated only of the temporal welfare and happiness of mankind under the government of God, apart from the heavenly and eternal state: for we wished to fix it deeply in our minds, that neither now nor heretofore, nor here, nor there, nor any where, have the laws of God been against the creatures that his hands have made.

Hitherto we have made but casual allusion to the ulterior purpose of Redemption, to which all previous legislation tended, in which all mysterious dealings were developed: the future eternal good to be brought out of present evil. This we have done, because it is a too careless, and yet too common language, to put the Law and the Gospel in contrast with each other; as if the one was the curse and the other the blessing of mankind: the one a device of wrath to work our misery; the other of love, to save us from the cruelty, rather than from the insufficiency, of the other. The truth is not so. The law that works death is holy, just, and good: it willeth not the death of the sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live. Infliction was not its aim, however it was its issue; and its awful sanctions were only the consequence, not the cause of transgression. Sin was not made death in order that man might die, but that he might not sin. If the law of God had been believed and obeyed; if it had found or if it could have communicated the will and the power to obey it, in any heart of man,—that man would have lived in it, and would have been made happy by it. But it did not. Man was a fallen creature and could not, a sinful creature

and would not, keep the law of God, all good and righteous and blessed as it was. Is the law therefore the author of our misery? No. Our design has been to disprove so careless a conclusion. But when we proceed to consider the Law of God in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, it is necessary to bear in mind that we actually know no other law: we know nothing of God's government of man irrespective of the Gospel. If the government of the heathen is irrespective of redemption,—which I am far from thinking that it is,—we know nothing of it. Every thing that has been revealed, exhibited or transacted here since Adam fell, has had respect to this new condition and design, has treated man as a sinner by nature, under process of recovery by the propitiation and intercession, the atoning blood and justifying righteousness of Christ. There are not two codes, one for the saved—another for the lost: one rule for the church, another for the world. All promulgation of divine law in Holy Writ, the only extant code, is addressed to persons to whom is made known their condemnation as sinners, and the plan of recovery by grace; and who consequently, whether they believe it or not, are the subjects of remedial rule, of Gospel administration; the sole rule of life, and measure of good and evil to the sons of men; by which, "whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear," all must be tried, and by it be justified, or according to it condemned. "To the one a savour of life unto life;—to the other of death unto death."

How new, how wonderful, how deeply interesting this exhibition of Jehovah's power and goodness may be, to a faithful and obedient universe, we know not now. We know how difficult, how costly, and how

glorious it has been to the enterprizer: and we shall know perfectly sometime,—what here we see but in part,—how suitable it has been; how successful and how blest, to the recovered and the saved, the obedient and believing.

CHAPTER II.

IN HIS SOVEREIGN LOVE.

"DRAW not nigh hither." It was the word of "Him that dwelt in the bush" when about to proclaim an act of sovereignty such as the world, such as the universe, perhaps, had never witnessed: a work of electing, preferential love; the shadow and foreshowing of a greater. Jehovah was about to separate from the fallen world a people for himself: to take a handful of clay from the spoiled mass, and remould it to his pleasure: not by invitations, entreaties, remonstrances,—which had been addressed to all mankind in vain—not by the operations of nature and of providence; wherein all mankind might perceive, or might refuse to perceive, that He was God; might accept Him or reject Him as their King. For no reason, but his choice; for no distinction but their descent from Abraham, his friend, and Jacob whom He loved—nor altogether that, for Abraham had other children;—He was to take a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptation, by signs, and by wonders, and by wars, by "a mighty hand and an outstretched arm;" which neither could

they refuse nor their enemies resist. To show forth his power in the purposes of his love, Jehovah had already selected one from among the children of wrath, a vessel of wrath, well fitted for his use, raised at the appointed time to the throne of Egypt; hardening to insane persistance, a heart already as hard as oppression and cruelty could make it. He was about, when he had brought his chosen forth from bondage, to "cast out the heathen and plant them;" to give them possession of a land that was not theirs, wherein their fathers had not so much as room to bury their dead; and that not by what is called among men the right of conquest, in fair and equal warfare, nor by the rights of purchase, of treaty, and concession. With supernatural force Jehovah took from the idolatrous nations a small portion of his own created world, which they had defiled and devoted to their guilty uses, and falsely called their own. "The world is mine, and the fulness thereof." And what was his to take, was his to give to whom He pleased, until He wanted it again. The waters parted, the impregnable walls fell down, and Israel shared by lot the sovereign gift.

"Draw not nigh hither." There is an arcanum in the exercise of the divine sovereignty in redemption, which we may not approach; we may not enquire into it,—we may not speculate upon it. God will not tell us why He does the thing He does, or does not the thing He leaves undone; wherefore He brought a chosen number forth, and left the rest to wonder, and to perish; dealt in mercy with the one nation, and in justice with the other. And when we prepare to listen to what He has revealed, to hear the proclamation of his gracious purpose, it behoves us to come with spirits humbled

and denuded, unworthy to listen, and incapable to judge. "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

Almighty justice must be impartial: for if it were not, it would not be justice: it renders to every man the utmost of what it owes;—"Friend, didst not thou agree with me for a penny?" The Law, irrespective of grace, is impartial, judging according to that which a man hath, and not according to that which he hath not. A covenant of works, if there were one, would be impartial; it would be rendered to every man according to his works; and to them who under the gospel administration are left in the hands of justice, it will be impartially administered; few stripes to whom few stripes are due,—many to whom many are due.

But surely it is a gratuitous notion, that Almighty love should be impartial, when it is the very nature of love to be not so; and if we speak of bounty, grace, and mercy, they lose their very nature if they be due; and if they be undue, justice cannot meddle with the distribution. In human language, impartial mercy, impartial grace, are scarcely congruous terms: our common perceptions find something contradictory in them; and yet we confuse ourselves with the notion, that all God's attributes, in the work of redemption at least, should be, and must be, as equal as his justice. In which of his works has He made known to us that they are so? Was He impartial in creation, when He made of the same dust one creature entitled and endowed to subjugate and govern all the rest, or set in higher essence the unequal hosts of heaven: cherubim and seraphim, angel and archangel? Is He equal in his providence, from the cold hedgerow, where the babe

lies unwelcomed, dishonoured, and disowned, to the costly gratulations of the royal bedchamber: from the lonely table of the widowed bride, to the full circle of the wife and mother: from the hoar hairs of prosperous senility, leaving the rest of his substance to his children, to the shrunk hand of premature decay, casting them pennyless on the world's compassion? No reasonable being charges his Maker with injustice, because he was not created of angelic essence: no right-minded person thinks the providence too partial, that gave him life in a cottage, and not upon a throne. Admit that these earthly differences are trifles compared with the gifts of divine grace, and may not be, and commonly are not, any proof of the divine favour: nevertheless, they are inequalities of God's bounty, and the simple poet's line, 'Not more than others I deserve,' &c. is the intuitive language of grateful prosperity: while the ignorant sufferer will sometimes talk of equalization and compensation for his sufferings after death: we need not say how vainly, for the Creator has promised no such adjustment of the inequalities of our condition here. "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" We think not otherwise in natural and providential gifts. Whence then is our impression, that grace and love, the most free and gratuitous of all things, are by a sort of necessity to be impartial? I am sure we learn it not in any transcript of the Divine image that may be traced in the nature of his creatures. From the lowest animal that has cognizable feeling, to the most perfected likeness of Christ among his saints on earth, we shall not find a creature who loves not something better than another thing: while the very word that enjoins on us to "Do good to all men," adds

an "especially," to the wide requirement. If it be asserted that the inequality of human love and bounty is ruled by circumstances of connection or of deserving: we know very well it is not so; our hearts would be ill contented if it were; our desire, our almost need of love, would scarcely be satisfied with impartiality: I doubt if we should be willing even to concede the name to an affection that evinced no preference. In one sense we are required to love all men, even our enemies, with that love of benevolence which is due from man to man, as his fellow-creature, and brother of the dust: but when these equal dues are paid, and other dues less equal, but still equitable, of consanguinity, of merit, or of gratitude, there remains a capability, a necessity of our very nature, of that nature we received of God, and therefore an emanation from himself, and in the likeness of himself: there remains a precious store of kindness, tenderness and affection, which is, and must be, and should be, preferential; which no one claims as a right, and no one thinks that he is wronged if he receives not. When the king has done equal justice to his subjects; rewarded services and distinguished merit; does he wrong in his favours, in his intimacy, in his love, every time he bestows them individually and exclusively? Who thinks of insisting that every subject should eat at the king's table indiscriminately, or share equally the titles and honours of his estate? When the householder has provided for his own, has loved his children, done justice to his servants, given bread to the hungry, and covering to the naked; is he supposed to be unjust to all mankind, if he take a child, if he take a friend, if he take even a poor pensioner into his house, to share its comforts and

delights, for no reason but that he loves them? Nobody says so; nobody thinks so. The intuitive feeling of our nature is so decidedly otherwise, that acts of special generosity and strong personal affection are much admired in the world; while he who attaches himself especially to nobody, passes in it for a churlish and cold-hearted being.

I make this comparison between divine and human love, only to shew that we have no premises, no analogies in the laws of nature, of reason, or of experience, whence to draw a conclusion, that love, as an attribute of Deity, should be necessarily equal, and ought to be impartial. I know there is a difference, a great difference. God's love is wholly and altogether gratuitous. He owes none to any man, and sees nothing in any man to deserve it. "Who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?" and nothing to requite it, save that which his own loving power works, as it were, in reciprocation of itself. But this strengthens rather than weakens the analogy, since it is exactly where nothing is due, that love becomes equitably special and particular.

In God as in man, there is a benevolent love embracing all mankind. He loved the world, the whole world, when he made it: He loved it, loved it all, when He gave his only-begotten Son to die for it: He loves it while He bears with it, and would have all men to be saved. In the seed-time and the harvest, in the sunshine and the rain, in the gift of life, and all that life requires, he loves it still? If there be in Deity another love resembling that of man: a love of relationship, of merit, of reciprocation, which at first-thought we might conclude there cannot be,—it is only in one

sense, and that we must reserve: it is irrelevant to our present subject; the sovereign exercise of God's special grace and mercy, in bringing out of the world a people for himself. All that we have said, is only to show how little ground there is, even in our own poor notions of right and wrong, to charge our Maker with injustice, in the unequal distribution of his grace; that grace which he never owed to any one, and distributes to every one severally as he will.

Was it not because the Almighty mind foresaw our difficulties, foresaw the insufficiency of finite understandings to compass abstractedly the doctrine of the election of grace, and predestination unto life eternal, that he graciously reduced it to the level almost of our senses, in a temporal representation of his spiritual work? Did he not just what a skilful teacher does, when he sets before children the tiny model of some great machine, to explain its action, the principles of which, without such illustration, would be beyond their apprehension? The orrery, for instance, with its revolving spheres and illuminated balls, to explain the wonders of the unapproachable heavens? In his promise to Abraham, before he was yet a father,—in his choice of Jacob, while he was yet in his mother's womb,—in the bringing of his people out of Egyptian bondage by irresistible, though still resisted power, and patient endurance of all their sins and provocations in the wilderness, till he gave them possession of the land of promise,—for no reason that we know of but his love, his glory, and his great name's sake;—our heavenly Father makes us an exact representation, a model, if I may so speak, of the separation and salvation of his church. Not of the external and professing

church,—I must differ from those, high and imposing as may be the authority of some of them, who look upon the Jewish nation as a type of the professing Christian Church. I think in doing so they lose the very nature and purpose of a type; which is the shadow and representation of another thing, but is not that thing itself. If the Jewish nation was the type of the external church, it was not the shadow, but the thing itself. It *was* the external church; the only one at that time existing. As such, it had all the characters that the professing church has now; its sanctions, its privileges, its judgments, and its condemnations. It had its ordained ceremony of admission, which made every member to be of Israel, but could not make them Israel,—as baptism makes a nominal, but cannot make a spiritual Christian. It had its laws, which, in that they were carnal,—its services, which, in that they were imperfect,—its works, which, in that they were not mixed with faith,—its priesthood, which, in that it was human and corrupt,—could not altogether save a soul; and were all finally disowned and disavowed by him who appointed and ordained them. In its actual and literal character, the Jewish Church was what the Christian Church is, a net let down to catch of every kind; for the better preservation of the faithful, and the conviction of them that vainly and corruptly enter it. Was not the ark, that beautiful type of the true Church, in its actual and natural character the same, containing both bad and good, both clean and unclean; the vile and outcast Ham, as well as the sanctified and chosen Shem? While in that it saved them all from the judgment of the world, it was a type only of such as shall be saved in Christ. I think it is most erroneous

to speak of those who enter the external church, as being 'in the ark;' for had they entered there they would be safe, when it shall be again as it was in the days of Noah; but here the typical figure fails. Old Testament ordinances, as such, were like our own, the machinery of God, for the carrying out of his gracious purposes; but they were also types of something else, of something which they were not; of something spiritual and invisible of which they were to be the sensible and symbolical representations. David was a prophet, a conqueror, and a king, appointed thereunto of God; but David was not a type of subsequent prophets, conquerors, and kings; he was a type of Christ. The temple with all its sacrifices, services, and consecrated instruments, was a place of worship consecrated to God, but not a type of other places of worship; it was a type of that invisible temple of which Jesus is the chief corner-stone, and his people lively stones built up together with him. The land of Canaan again—if the Jewish Church were a type of the external Christian Church, the land of promise should be a type of Christendom, not of heaven.

It is an important distinction; at this time most deeply important: for upon it is built the high assumption of an exclusive Christian Church, claiming to be the antitype of Israel according to the flesh, with all the unity, security, and exclusiveness that pertained to the temporal inheritance, symbolic of the spiritual inheritance which it prefigured. If Christian Churches will have the Jewish Church for an *example*, let them have it and be warned: its carnal ordinances, its beggarly elements, its lying traditions and polluted altars, are judged and done with; and many have come

from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, and sat down at the table, while the children of the kingdom are excluded. Its typical privileges and promises, the covenant that cannot be broken, the adoption that cannot be reversed, the inheritance whose entail cannot be cut off, the espousals that admit of no divorce, the love that changes not, the truth that fails not, the Canaan which is Abraham's and his seed for ever,—these, "which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ," cannot in "the shadow" be transferred to Christendom, because the typical dispensation is ended: in "the body" they were never their's or our's, corporately and exclusively, as a visible community: "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it." They pertain to the Church which is His body; "In whom neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; in whom is neither Jew nor Gentile, Papist nor Protestant, Churchman nor Dissenter, "for ye are all one by faith in Christ Jesus." Where are they, this Israel of God? In Canaan some; and some between the walls of Jordan's parted waters; gazing with longing eye from Pisgah's top, or on the uplifted serpent in the wilderness; some with shodden feet and staff in hand, prepared to go forth in haste from under the burthens of Egypt; and some perhaps, yes many, still lying among the pots, who for anguish of spirit and cruel bondage, understand not yet the message of God by Moses. Who are they? On earth they have many separating names, but only a uniting one in heaven: those have been written oftentimes in pride, in malice, even in blood; this upon a white stone, without blot or erasure; a new name, which no man knoweth but he that receiveth it; and

he by ignorance finds it sometimes hard to read, and harder still to tell. If we must use names, let them be at least what God in his word has given; let us call them 'believers' as distinguished from those that perish through unbelief; or 'children of God,' as he calls them, in opposition to the children of the wicked one; or 'saints,' as separate from a world that lieth in wickedness. Shame be to those who dare to give or take, as significant of spiritual and eternal separation, appellations of man's devising. If the children of God prefer to name themselves after some new head,—like to be called 'sons of the church,' or 'high churchmen,' now let them stand by it when the new name shall be called in heaven,—whatever it be, I am sure it will not be that: for there is nothing high that shall not be made low. "Friend, how camest thou up hither?" will be the startling address of Him that sitteth upon the throne of distribution, to many who in the pride of their hearts have separated themselves from the body of God's people, and put names of contempt upon their brethren, or names of assumption upon themselves, rending in sunder the body of Christ; equally, whether by tearing themselves off to form a body of their own; or tearing others off, to cast out and disavow them. Separate external communities there may be, and perhaps must be: let them pass for what they are, things temporal, things human; temporal distinctions, human preferences. But of the Israel of God,—the called according to his purpose,—who profess themselves and believe themselves to be in Christ, let those who will turn to the right hand or the left, will go before or stay behind beware lest they do what the children of Gad and Reuben and Manasseh were warned against, when they chose

their lot on the other side of Jordan: "Rebel not against the Lord, and rebel not against us, in building ye an altar beside the altar of the Lord our God:"—"Wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the Lord hath given them?" Rather let us be ready "to go every man armed for war before the Lord to battle," making common cause against the common foe, until He hath driven out his enemies from before him. Thus we may take our choice, and have our preferences; I see no reason why we should not; assured though I am, that Jehovah has but one preference, makes but one separation. "The Lord knoweth them that are his."

As in the typical election, all who were not Jews were Gentiles, were heathen,—although there was a method by which the stranger might be joined to the Lord,—so, in the antitype, the election of grace, "all who are not members of Christ are under the curse of sin, and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel;" although there is a way, a door, "I am the door," "Whosoever the Father draweth, shall run after me."

To some the text requires, no comment, for they remember; it matters little whether the palace of Pharaoh or his brick-field: the adoption of Pharaoh's daughter, or the stripes of his taskmasters. The prince of this world has many services and many wages, and knows well how to distribute them according to the capacity and temper of his bond-slaves, for the better rivetting of their eternal chains. There were treasures in Egypt, and there was learning: there were riches and flesh-pots, as well as daily tasks. And there were gods too; false trusts and idol-worship. In the world's service the intellect, the feelings, the consci-

ence, all must be engaged; kept occupied and driven hard by still-increased demands, that there be not a pause of thought, a vacuum of feeling, an unoccupied faculty to cry out, "Let us go and do sacrifice to our God." They who remember this servitude with all its throbbing cares and palling pleasures, have not to learn the sovereign love that found them, the sovereign voice that said to them, "I will rid you of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched-out arm, and with great judgments: and I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God." Neither while memory tells how long they "hearkened not,"—"understood not,"—"tied and bound with the chain of their sins," need the rescued ones be told of the sovereign power that gave charge to the "Moses whom they refused" to do the work himself, and "bring them out:" with signs more signal than eyes or ears could witness, with wonders more wonderful than changes in earth or seas—even by the power invincible of his own Holy Spirit, that bloweth where it listeth, and doth—what the miracles of Egypt did not—turn the heart from idols to serve the living God. And, oh! if from the heights of his Lebanon, or the borders of his Carmel, the ransomed sinner casts back his eyes upon the way he came,—the long, long vista of intervening years since he ate the first passover, and marked the blood of sprinkling on his door-post; years perhaps of half-heartedness and wearisome indecision—years possibly of guilty compromise and faith disgraced;—while his eye lights upon some spot where he would have turned back, had not mercy closed up the way behind him, where he would have resold his birth-right for some vanity of earth, had not Providence withheld the price

—where he called the place Bochim, by reason of the message of reproach that met him; to such an one we need not contend for the sovereign purpose that has brought him through. He knows it—a truth that cannot be unlearned—a law written upon his heart. The thing that he knows not, is what we cannot tell him; what perhaps he never will know; why he "was taken and another left." "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor?" Sovereign in his purpose, of which he rendereth no account—"I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion;"—sovereign in his foreknowledge, where no one else may read, of "names written in the Lamb's book of life before the world began;"—sovereign in his predestination of them whom He foreknew; "having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will;"—sovereign in his calling of them whom He did predestinate; "Who hath saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace"—sovereign to justify them whom He has called; "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins;"—sovereign is Jehovah also in his grace, in all the gifts and influences of his Spirit; "That we should be holy and without blame before him in love;"—and sovereign shall He be to consummate his work; "I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far and my daughters from the end of the earth; every one that is called by my Name; for I have created him for my glory." This may be literally accomplished, and I believe it will be in the

recalling of Israel after the flesh, for the fulfilment of the temporal promises, and the perfecting of the type: since, in Holy Scripture neither the type nor the anti-type—neither the temporal nor the spiritual election ends in casting off: "The Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance." But the application of this and similar passages to the type, makes it only the more sure in spiritual application to the election of grace. We have it exactly repeated in New Testament terms—"That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are in earth; even in Him; in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will; that we should be to the praise of his glory."

We do not comprehend it! How should we, it is the work of Deity? But our Almighty Father has done all a Father could, to bring it within reach of our perceptions, to the intent that we may acknowledge and receive it. While the secret workings of his sovereignty to bring the soul to heaven, are made apparent by the supernatural interferences of the Old Testament history, its external workings are fully exhibited in the transactions of the New Testament. The great business of the Son upon earth, together with the atonement for sin, was to "Show us the Father;" to make, in the characters of humanity,—the only form in which we could appreciate them,—an exhibition of the works and attributes of Deity; and all his actings as man are a transcript of his mind as God. Therein we may safely contemplate the out-acting of the Father's

sovereign mercy in the selection of his disciples; his rule for choosing them, his method of calling them, his arguments to persuade them, his offers to induce them; with only this difference, that what Jesus did with his own voice once, He does now by his Spirit and his written word: "It shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I send it." In the election of our Lord's first disciples, the originating cause is not so much as hinted at. There is no mention of their previous character, or of anything to distinguish and fit them for the high destiny to which they were preferred. We have only this assurance, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." Of this first step, Deity gives no account; waits for no co-agency or consent from man. In the next step there is consent, and seems to be free-will; for albeit the blessed Saviour says, "No man can come unto me, except the Father draw him,"—there was no apparent constraint upon the will, or ostensible exercise of power, to find his disciples, and bring them to himself. Jesus called and separated them then, as he calls and separates his believing people now, by divers ways; beginning with himself, and ending in himself, but always with their own, free, consenting agency. Some by the preaching of his ministry; "Behold the Lamb of God. And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus." Some by the influence of believing friends; "He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus." "Follow me," said he to one who was neither asking nor seeking; but who, reached without human agency, having heard the call, obeyed it, arose, and left all,

and followed. "Whence knowest thou me," is the first movement of many a guileless heart, when the word of truth reaches the conscience; discloses us to ourselves, and works conviction through the medium of experience. And he, born out of due time, the persecutor and blasphemer; met, as many are, on the high-way of open and fearless opposition; was so arrested, as he himself declares,—"That in me first, Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." And whereas there are others of our Lord's first twelve, the method of whose calling is not mentioned, the brothers of Jesus, as I think, and others; we may believe they are for examples no less, of the many, who, born as it were into the household of faith, brought up in the fear and admonition of the Lord, can mark no period or special means of conversion, and remember no time when they were strangers to Christ. Although such disciples have as much passed from death unto life as every other living soul, it may have been by a power unfelt: sanctified, perhaps, as Jacob was, while yet in his mother's womb; or called, as Timothy seems to have been, in earliest childhood. No matter how, no matter when, it is the act of God; and whatever be the difficulties and differences of our views of the divine sovereignty now; amid that great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, not one will bring dissonance into heaven's music, by ascribing to himself one step of his own salvation.

Is this law of God's sovereignty against us? Would it have been better for fallen nature that it had been otherwise;—that we had all been left on equal terms, to

work out our own salvation, without the special grace that worketh in us? Should we work better, should we work more confidently and courageously, if, the way of salvation being revealed, we had been left to our choice, instead of being saved by His?—if Israel had been left in Egypt, till, weary of their chains, they had risen against their tyrant, and fought their own way out? The prophet did not think so when he said, "Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it; shout, ye lower parts of the earth, break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein, for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel." The Psalmist did not think so when he exclaimed, "The Lord reigneth: let the earth rejoice." How deeply responded in every believing heart. St. Paul thought otherwise when he gave it as the very motive for exertion;—"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do." Heathen legislators and philosophers never thought so; who, little as they knew of deity, knew humanity well. When they would have an unequal battle won, an unequal enemy resisted; they procured, through some oracle, a decree of victory from heaven, which fulfilled itself by the confidence and intrepidity it inspired. Assurance of victory, certainty of success, nerves the warrior's arm, and makes the daring adventurer to prosper. Where can the Christian warrior find assurance and confidence like to this—"Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom?"

We know the dark reverse; and how pertinaciously the human intellect refuses to separate election from

exclusion; a sovereign will to save, from a sovereign pleasure to condemn; making this blessed law, of free, unmerited grace, to be a hard enactment against them whom it saves not. Yet there is in the word of God, and in his dealings, no such thing; no exclusion, no enactment or exception against any man: and why should we invent one? If in some great accident, or calamity, a few persons escape while many suffer; if the ship founders at sea, and only one is saved; if fire or pestilence desolates a house, and leaves but one alive; we recognize special goodness and mercy to the spared, and grateful adoration fills the heart of the rescued one. We never say it was that act of mercy lost the rest; albeit, it was the judgment of providence that did it. God has condemned the world for sin, and if we repent not, he will judge us in his anger. If we would impeach his sovereignty, we must lay the charges there. It is not the interference of his sovereign grace and mercy to save a remnant, that decrees destruction to the rest.

"Neither let the stranger that has joined himself to the Lord, speak, saying, God hath utterly separated me from his people." In the typical separation, even in that close partition-wall, there was a way, by which the worshippers of strange gods might enter, and become participant of all the blessings of the first covenant: "Also the sons of the stranger that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord to be his servants,—every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant;—even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be ac-

cepted on my altar." This is no sentence of exclusion against all who were not born of Abraham. Where is there any such in all God's holy book? Why venture we to assume it? Why dare we to announce it? Why drive ourselves or others to despair, in searching for it or supposing it? It is not there. One sole agreement, one point of unanimity will hereafter be found, in hell, as well as heaven: Not one lost soul will escape the misery of knowing that he did the work himself; the election was his own.

CHAPTER III.

IN HIS INCARNATION AND SUBSTITUTION.

"GREATER love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." If this be the compass of his capability—all that he knows, all that he feels of love, how is man to stretch himself, to expand his thoughts, to enlarge his vision, to adapt his language to "the manner" of Jesus' love, in the sacrifice of himself? It is impossible; for it was such love as could exist in God alone. The motive of Christ's death as much involves his deity, as its execution and its efficacy; because created being is as incapable of the one as of the other. "Peradventure," the Apostle says, and Paul spoke the mind of the Omniscient—"Peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die." Men have died, or exposed themselves to die, for something that was their own: their country, their children, their home and liberties; and even for lower motives; for power, gain, or glory. But in doing so, what did they? Cut off from mortality a few uncertain years—give away what was not theirs; and brave a little sooner, what a little later would not have waited

their consent. The heroes of classic story did no more than exchange dates, when the one compassed his own death to save the other's life. At one glance we see the invalidity of all comparison: when man dies he does but what he must do sometime, for the sake of something worthy of the sacrifice: when the Son of God took upon himself the nature of humanity, it was to do what he never need have done, never could have done; it was to enable and expose himself to suffer and to die. "Being found in fashion as a man, he became obedient unto death." For what? For something worth the sacrifice? He thought so; and therein, if I may so speak, is the very God-head of his love: in its gratuitousness—in its self-createdness—"In that while we were yet enemies"—hateful and hating creatures—he *could* so love us. We say again, created being could not; it is incapable of self-begotten, self-sufficing love; without a spark to kindle, or fuel to feed the flame; without worth or loveliness to inspire or sustain it. "Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God,—made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." And not the likeness only, or the form only; for as in the beginning, the Word that was with God was God; so when he came to dwell among us, the Word that was made flesh, was flesh; very man no less than very God. We are as much in danger of losing sight of the real humanity of our Lord in the contemplation of his Godhead, as of forgetting his deity in the consideration of his humanity: whereas, while both these truths, and the belief of them, are equally necessary to salvation, the ever-present memory and realization of both,

is essential to the present peace and comfort of our souls. If the one end of the mysterious ladder Jacob saw had been short of heaven, or the other short of earth, there had not been, for any human soul, a safe and fearless passage: and we, if we could trust it surely, and gaze on it fearlessly, need be very jealous of whatever may obscure our view of either end, or of any link between: confusion in the vision brings doubt into the heart; and then the head grows dizzy; and then the foot falters, and the hold relaxes.

The doctrine of the Incarnation is no obscure, metaphysical, speculative dogma, which may be acquiesced in without faith, or doubted without destruction: which the simple may leave to the learned, the practical Christian to the doctrinal disputant. A God incarnate is the fundamental doctrine, the corner-stone of Christianity, without which it is a baseless and a crownless structure; that may bury beneath its ruins, but cannot afford shelter to the sinner who has taken refuge in it. "Whom say ye that I am?" Peter's response must be breathed from the very heart, before the soul can enter into rest. Upon this rock alone the church may stand, and here alone the gates of hell prevail not. Meantime the acceptance of this doctrine is no easy thing, which we may leave to heedless probability, to habit, education, and a bare profession. "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee:" neither can the flesh receive it, nor the fleshly mind consent to it, nor the fleshly nature love it. "No man can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." We may greet him with the name of Lord: we may call upon him, worship him, imitate him, even love him, after a manner. So men have

often done by mere created things: angels, and saints, and mortal beings like themselves: a sort of worship that would make of Christ an idol, but no God. With a consenting, realizing, actuating faith, to accept as GOD the crucified Redeemer, has always been that stumbling stone, which grinds to powder those on whom it falls; the sceptic, and blasphemer, and reviler, who openly deny the doctrines of the cross: and on which meantime, so many have fallen and been broken—inconsiderately, incredulously, indifferently calling themselves Christians, and conceding the name to others, without regard to the equal and proper Deity of the Son: that the pierced hand which brought salvation to the world, was in very truth the hand that made it. It is a great mystery: it is essentially "THE mystery." "This is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh." But mystery is no bar to faith: and no sooner is this doctrine received into the believing heart, than it becomes the treasure as well as the mystery of godliness; the crown of our rejoicing as well as the foundation of our hopes. Whose is the heart that never throbbed, nay ached with over-fulness of delight, at the thought that Christ is God? Let such a one be assured there is a profundity of happiness as well as truth in religion, that he has not yet reached: but he may reach it; and turn the dark unfathomable mystery into a bright, bottomless mine of joy, whence he may draw for his need, and draw more and more for ever; little mind will he have then to quarrel with its depth. One class of persons we know there is, who profess not to believe that the crucified was God: and there is so much of consistency in their creed, that they do not profess to trust their salvation to him: whatever be the value Socinians

set upon Christ's death as man, they do not consider it that perfect and sufficient atonement for sin which it can be only as he was God. But there is another class of whom I think with more wonder and some doubt; who do profess to know the infinite character of the one great sacrifice and satisfaction made for sin, and recognise in the blood of the Covenant the blood of God; yet make so light of it, take at so little its efficacious value, one scarcely can think that they believe it. Grosser than his who thought that the gift of God might be purchased for money; baser than his who parted with it for one morsel of meat, is the estimate of Christ's atoning blood by those who think its efficacy can lose or gain by administration of their own poor, perishing, polluted hands; or aught that they can add to it or take from it. I do not make myself their judge, to decide a question which may decide their everlasting state: I believe, by Him who judges, it will be decided individually; not in communities or communions, whether held together by error or by truth. In the truest communions there are wrong-hearted ones, whose pure creed will never save them: in the most unsound there may be wrong-headed ones, who do not understand or intend their own profession, and so may escape its guiltiness. God knows: but when we see this precious blood depreciated, its value postponed, its efficacy made dependent on names and forms and places and ceremonies; ordinances, institutions, works, sufferings, merits, or whatever else that man's wit can substitute therefor, or add thereunto; and men profess to find more safety and repose in these, than in the sole value of the death of Christ; the doubt forces itself upon me, and I return it to every such a one, and bid him lay it

deeply to his heart,—whether he does indeed believe that He who died was GOD.

"Crucified for our sins, risen again for our justification." Herein again I know not, how the daring of the sceptical, or the hesitation of the doubtful, is to be silenced, save with the actual deity of the Crucified. That God should take pleasure in the suffering of the innocent,—that He should consent to let a thankless, worthless being, be ransomed at such a price, laying on one guiltless head the iniquity of us all, in the crude notion some have of the substitution, is revolting to our common sense of right and wrong. And while some are bold enough to question the justice of their Maker in such a scheme, others are timidly afraid to look it in the face, lest they be betrayed into doubting of their Maker's wisdom. We should be loth to answer the former, because we do not admit of the right of the creature to judge his Maker, and decide what he could not, or what he should not do. But God does not so act towards his believing people, as to shock the sense He has given them of moral right and wrong. True, his thoughts are not as our thoughts, or his ways as our ways; because they are above, beyond, exceeding; but they are contrary only to our corrupted and perverted sense, not to the judgment He has implanted in us, or the conscience He has given us for our guide: neither are the laws by which He judges, at variance with the rules that He has given us to judge by. The substitution of the innocent for the guilty, would not be justice in human legislation; it would not be admissible by any common rule of right and wrong. If an imperial despot could be supposed,—and such comparisons are sometimes, I think very rashly, introduced

in divinity to strike the popular ear,—if such a one could be permitted to put to death an innocent and beloved son, in the stead of a whole nation of vanquished rebels, the act would be abhorrent to humanity, and offensive we doubt not to the Most High; the heroism of the sufferer would be scarcely admired of mankind, and would certainly not be well-pleasing in the sight of God; for there is no sanction in his government or his word, for the self-sacrifice of the innocent for the guilty, the worthy of the worthless. If such a transaction ever did, or could take place among men, it would leave the judge a murderer, the substitute a self-destroyer, and the culprit, a culprit still; because a substitution of that kind would remove the punishment, but not the guilt or imputation of the crime.

Oh! pause before we venture to suppose the work of God in redemption was such a one; before we take up so crude a notion of the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. I do not know what people think that Jesus was, who do not think that He was God. If the Crucified was some holy angel willing to come down and suffer death for man, or if He was some pure original thing, created and fitted, and appointed of the Father for that very purpose, then it was such a transaction as we have described; and were it so revealed, we might only answer, "Even so, Lord, if so it seemeth good to thee." I am not bold enough to say God could not, and ought not so to do; but I say, it would be contrary to all that we know of the mind and will of God, and to all perception He has given us of right and wrong. Blessed be his name, He has not left us to abide by this conclusion, and find our only refuge in submission. The union of the Godhead and the manhood, is one

Christ; the proper deity and the proper humanity of that most righteous One, unfolds to us a transaction of a quite different character; of which the sublime justice, the high morality, the perfect fitness, the exalted wisdom, and pure unmeasurable love, are laid open to our perceptions, and brought down to our appreciation: while the mystery of the divine achievements, the possibility of such co-existence, and the manner of such a union, are worthy to be, as they are, the secrets of omnipotence.

He who sent was He who came: "I and my Father are one." He who died was He who slew: "I lay down my life, no man taketh it from me." He who chose the ransom was He who paid it: "He counted not his life dear, for the joy that was set before him." The demand of his own justice was answered by his own mercy, and paid by his own suffering. There was no unrighteous judgment in condemning the innocent, while the criminal escaped. All that He gave, all that He took, all that He appointed or remitted, was his own. There was no suicidal heroism in the sacrifice. He assumed to himself the flesh He crucified for us. The life was his own, and He had a right to destroy it; such as no created being could have, for they received it of their Maker. He gave it to himself.

All this is involved in the Deity of the substitute; and not less is involved in his humanity; for the fact that He was man, puts an end to all that remains of the before-drawn comparison, by presenting us with union instead of substitution. By taking humanity into his Godhead, Jesus enabled it to abide its own condemnation,—to suffer its own judgment,—to expiate its own sin. The Word became flesh; and in

Him was flesh judged, condemned, and crucified: the nature that suffered was the nature that had transgressed; and in so far as the union is made available by subsequent application of the Spirit, it is left righteous, and not as in the supposed case of simple substitution, the acquitted still guilty, the criminal pardoned a criminal not the less. "He was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Not made a sinner: Christ never was a sinner, nor bore a sinful nature. Much as I usually hesitate to say what God cannot do, I am not afraid to say that Deity could not unite with itself an unholy thing: but He could do what none else can, bring a clean thing out of an unclean: and taking his manhood from the original type, He had it pure and sinless as He made it at the first: pure from the spring of life, before it had run into polluted streams. To it He added, infinite value, infinite perfection, and infinite capability, to do and suffer all the Father's will,—to become beautiful in the Father's sight, and holy in his judgment, and meet for his service, and worthy of his love; and took it so to heaven. And there it is, "The first-born of many brethren,"—the head of many members,—the vine-root of many branches,—the seed-corn of a rich and glorious harvest; as surely and as eternally, as mysteriously, yet as fastly joined to the humanity of the risen Lord, as that was to the Deity that enabled it to fulfil all, and atone for all, the race of Adam failed in. We abase ourselves while we speak of such things: we assume not to understand them,—we affect not to explain them: but we can lay hold of them; we can embrace them; we can bind them to our hearts and to our lives, which seems bound up in them; the source,

the sustenance, the immortality of our renewed existence. We press these contemplations upon others, because we know and feel their value; their practical personal value, of which the truth alone can save us; of which the belief alone can justify us; of which the consciousness alone can give us peace. Our own union with the glorified humanity of Christ is the subject of another chapter: but we must first lay hold of the master-key that can alone unlock that treasury of bliss—"Immanuel, God with us." We cannot gaze too long or too intently on the pale rising of the Sun of Righteousness; more suited to our eyes than its meridian splendour; at least till by use, they become prepared for its intensity. We can only learn joy in the exaltation of the Son of Man, by reaching it through the humiliation of the Son of God.

At no moment of our Lord's abiding in the flesh, was his Deity undiscernible to the eye of faith; while, not a single property, if I may so speak, of manhood was wanting in him, sin alone excepted: which is no property of manhood, but a miserable blot upon the spoiled original.

The miraculous conception, first:—"That holy thing," borne in an earthly womb, and nursed on a mortal mother's bosom: there had been other births miraculous in a manner, but nothing after this manner: we need not dwell upon the difference: it was enough to mark "the God." And then the song of angels: they hail no birth of Adam's sin-born children: why should they, poor heritors of pain and death? They sang over the innocent first-born of the dust, the guiltless, and the happy. It is said, they sing in heaven over every new-created soul, born again to righteous-

ness and bliss: but they were never heard to sing on earth again, save at the birth of the sinless, the unfallen.

Then, in the leading of the predicted star, and the kingly worship of that unlikely presence-chamber; and what holy Simeon and the widowed prophetess saw, while the offering of poverty was presented for the low-born babe: and again, when he took his place in the temple, claimed his high parentage, and gave tokens of untaught wisdom and unacquired learning; there was enough in all to manifest the Godhead to such as would believe. Meantime, not a circumstance, not a faculty, not an infirmity even of sinless humanity was wanting, to prove that he took upon him not merely the form and likeness of a man, but actual and perfect manhood. Why else those mysterious relations of gradual developement in mind and body? He grew in stature—he increased in wisdom and knowledge—in favour with God and man. Why? but because he had a human mind as well as a human body: and human minds come not to maturity at once; and the infinite wisdom, knowledge, and power, that abode in his, waited for the ordinary developement of the natural faculties. Very striking, to my mind, is the obscurity that remains upon the life of our Lord during his early manhood. What was He—what did He, during these thirty years? We should know this of any other distinguished man,—any hero or scholar of the world. Did his historians, his companions, his brethren not know? Or was it to distinguish by concealment the progress of a life, distinguished at the beginning by public manifestations, that the Scriptures do not tell us of Jesus Christ what has been so minutely related of patriarchs and kings?

There might be eyes of faith—a believing mother's eye, perhaps—we do not know—that saw the God throughout. It is expressly said, "Neither did his brethren believe in him." I feel strongly persuaded that during that period Jesus was fulfilling, as a man, a Hebrew—the Jewish ritual, moral and ceremonial? the whole first covenant: the law of nature and the law of Moses; perfectly, purely, and meritoriously, in the presence of his Father in Heaven: thus confirming and honouring the law of the olden covenant, before he closed it for ever, and entered by baptism upon the fulfilment of the new: in the minutest particular and extremest perfection, carrying out the forms and duties of them both. But, mark: if innocent manhood had done this—if any measure of the Spirit could have enabled mere humanity to do it, what would it have been worth? Nothing, but for himself. He would have done no more than was his duty to do; no more than the law required: no more than God demanded. Strange beyond all strangeness is the doctrine so largely accepted, of supererogatory merits in the creature, the erring, sinning creature. Even the pure humanity of the Son of God could not have had any, but by that union with this Deity, which gave infinite value to his obedience and his sufferings. Do we suppose that Jesus endured no more than a righteous man would have suffered during the three years of his passion? Righteous men would, in that case, exceed him often: many have gone through three times three years of greater calamity than his appeared to be, and died more painful deaths: and that for conscience' sake. Immanuel's power to suffer and to feel, was where his power was to merit and to do: in his Deity, and imparted thence to his humanity. The law required the

obedience of a man: He gave it the obedience of a God, and so has merits left to purchase grace for all men. Justice demanded the suffering of a man: He gave it the suffering of a God, and thereof wanting nothing for himself, it all remains to make atonement for us; and is enough for all. I believe we are utterly incapable of conceiving the extent of either his merits or his sufferings. We are accustomed to feel more pity for the afflictions of high and holy natures, than for those of ordinary men; and we do right: for high and holy natures are capable of more suffering than base and vicious ones. But urge our imagination as we may, we cannot reach the most faint idea of the suffering of a divine being, made capable to suffer, and exposed to it, as Jesus was in the days of his humiliation. We lose ourselves in the amazing thought! Be it so—if only it be the amazement of faith, and hope, and joy. Let us lose ourselves, and renounce ourselves, and forget ourselves in contemplation of the glorious mystery: if only we be lost in shame withal for our low estimate of the cost of our redemption: thinking, as we do, sometimes to dispense with the Saviour's merits: and other times to purchase his merits with our own; nor that the lowest price; for, while many are thinking to obtain salvation, or to procure the benefits of Christ's death, by obedience to the law of God, depending for acceptance on prayer, and penitence, and baptism, and church-communion, and other their good works, because these are ordained of God, and commanded to be done: not a few are merchandizing for the same precious purchase with a still baser coin,—with forms and fantasies of their own devising, which God has not commanded, and for which they can produce no law at all but of their own enact-

ing. And, oh! the depth to which our thoughts have fallen from the contemplation of that high and holy theme! even to behold no inconsiderable number, whose supposed merits, proffered to Almighty God, as substitutes or make-weights of the atoning sacrifice, are things in actual opposition and contradiction to His word. Do *these* believe the crucified was God? We ask again and leave it, returning with glad and grateful hearts to the contemplation of the Incarnate.

He wrought no judgments, uttered no thunders to make his Godhead known: He never brake the bruised reed—He never quenched the smoking flax—He never raised the veil through which we might look upon the face of God and live. The voice that calmed the storm was never heard to raise it: the look that brought Peter to repentance was not turned in anger upon Judas. When He spake as man never spake, what was it He said? "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink." When He did the works that none other man did, what were they? "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up." When He passed sentence of destruction, how? "Jesus lifted up his eyes and wept." When he refused to incredulity the manifestation of deity so often given to faith, in what spirit did He it? "He sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek a sign?" If He put forth his power on his own behalf, it was not to make bread of stones, and stay his hunger; nor to bring legions of angels to his defence. Once he did it, but it was "Notwithstanding lest we offend them. * * * That take and give unto them for me and thee." In no one instance did the manifestation of his deity interfere with the perfec-

tion of his humanity. With all the claims, with all the rights and powers of the Godhead in possession, He did no single act that was not blameless, that was not righteous, as from man to man; that was not feeling, that was not pitiful as from fellow to fellow.

In his private communings likewise with the Father, Jesus was Son of Man, as well as Son of God: in his prayers, his supplications, his strong cries and tears,—when He was heard in that He feared,—when He learned obedience by the things suffered, and was made perfect. Not made perfect in innocence and purity,—for this He had always been: but perfected in every act and function and character and office of humanity, of which obedience is not the least, perhaps it is the greatest excellence; and perfecting his work, that He had undertaken; his character, that He had assumed, his fitness to be the elder brother of his Father's house in all the traits and lineaments of that nature to which his brethren were to be conformed. Some persons are staggered and troubled about these expressions: as if being made perfect, growing in grace, &c. implied some defectiveness in the original nature. But why? if it be remembered that Jesus assumed not humanity in full grown stature and maturity and finish, to show us what it should be, and withdraw. He took it in infancy, in weakness and infirmity, to go through the whole process, if I may so speak, of *making* it what it should be; as well in developement as in condition, as well in action as in principle: to exhibit not the human nature only, but the human life,—the course, as well as the being of our existence. How else could He have fulfilled all righteousness, and done and suffered *all* the Father's will; a perfect performer, as He was a perfect undertaker

of man's redemption, and leave a perfect work? It became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect. Why? "Because he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified, are all one." It was *our* nature that Jesus had to carry, through that process of perfection, by grace, by prayer, by fear, by patience, by obedience, in act as well as principle; not to bring himself to the glory whence he came, and for which He was always meet, but to bring us there through hosts of enemies, and all our own unfitness. He was the Captain of our salvation,—a warrior full armed and ready for the battle,—perfect in valour, devotedness, and skill, when He came upon the field: but a perfect conqueror only when He left it, having fought and triumphed, and carried off the spoil. In him *we* suffered, feared, obeyed, fought, conquered; were born of the Spirit, lived in the Spirit; died for sin, and unto sin; rose again to righteousness and everlasting glory. If anything of this had been wanting in our substitute, He had not been one with us nor we with him: the Scriptures expressly so explain it, in the same passage:—"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same,"—with all the consequences attached to flesh and blood from Adam's transgression: the infirmities, the miseries, the penalties: Christ took them really not putatively, sin excepted; that alone was by imputation, which could not be joined to infinite holiness and purity: if it had, our debt, alas! might have been enhanced, not paid, by being made partakers with Him; as bankrupt partners share each other's losses. It is a low comparison, for

things so lofty, but God himself makes use of such: and I do it now to mark the folly and the risk of those who look to any other unity for remission of sins, and everlasting gain: trust any substitute short of a sinless sacrifice, or think to gain by the funded dross of human merit accumulated in the universal Church. Was Paul crucified for you,—were ye baptized in the name of Paul? Verily and if they were, thinking thereby to be made partakers of Paul's saintly sufferings and labours, they must be partakers also in his sins, taken at his own estimate, "the chief of sinners." And if Christians now prefer, as some are seen to do, to be united to a church, baptized into a church, instead of into Christ, for absolution and justification, by virtue of its offices, its ordinances and prayers, or whatever good works may be found therein; such unions are for better or worse: we must share in its sins as well; its short-comings, its corruptions, its errors, and hypocricies; and all the uncleanness of its holy things: we must count all, and strike the balance even. Well if we be not losers: gainers we cannot be of that which can alone be accepted of the Father; an offering without spot or wrinkle; a reckoning fully paid, and wealth enough to purchase earth and heaven: payment of all we owe to God, and purchase of what God has never owed to us; of the earth we have forfeited by sin, and the heaven we could not have merited by obedience: that birthright Esau sold, but Jacob did not buy. Our father Abraham's inheritance can be sold indeed, and often is, for some small earthly good: but it was never bought for less than the infinite merits of the eternal son of God.

We should try to take better measure of our own expectations—"The substance of things hoped for"—how much more is gained in Christ than ever Adam had to lose: a peaceable nature, a perishable paradise, a terminable dominion over sublunary things; compared, or contrasted rather, with the terms in which our life in Christ is spoken of. Herein, we are indeed confined to terms; for ideas of such exalted bliss we have none; but the descriptive phrases are the words of God: they cannot mean less than they express; they do mean more than human language is competent to express—than eye hath seen, or ear hath heard, or heart of man conceived. Who knows what is meant by this? "The glory thou hast given me, I have given them." No destructible glory, but his own—an exceeding and eternal weight. Or this?—"I will that they be with me where I am." No perishable Paradise, but an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away; fulness of joy and pleasure for evermore. And this?—"He that overcometh shall sit down on my throne, as I have overcome and am sat down upon my Father's throne." No fading crown or terminable reign over the things that perish: "They shall reign for ever and ever." "With him," "in him," "like him."—We know not what it means, but we know what it cannot mean; for He is immutable, incorruptible, immortal. Judge then if it wants no more power to save than it did to lose: if the second Adam need be no more than the first: or could be less than the Lord of Life from heaven. Suppose it even were so—suppose it possible that what a man and the sin of man could do, a man and the righteousnes of a man could undo: to make

of humanity again "a living soul," in place of what he is, a dead one; and beget us alive, as Adam begat us dead. This comes but too near the notion many have of the new birth in Christ; and indeed, if Christ be not God, and his Spirit be not God, or if the new birth be otherwise derived than from our union with Him, I know not why it should be more than this: another, forfeitable, terminable life, which we may sin away a second time; and shall, if that be all. But, what a low, miserable estimate of our new creation in him, who is a quickening spirit—a well-spring of life which having the issues of being in itself, can never fail, or be cut off! "God hath given unto us eternal life; and this life is *in* his Son." It is not said *from* him—for then albeit he were God, as still he must be from whom life could be received; nevertheless, we should be but living souls, and liable again to death: as streams cut off, dry up before the sunshine. It is not said *with* him; for then albeit he were a high and holy being, and could sustain his own humanity in life, the power that upheld him might not be imparted or impartible to us, and therefore might afford no security for our standing. Now, pause a moment, and compare either of these positions with the believer's great and glorious expectations, founded and established on the word of God. Hardly shall we be then persuaded to forego our faith in the co-existent natures of our Lord, comprising as it does our life in him, and his in God, by union of our humanity to his, and his to Deity. "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." To have life in himself is the attribute of Deity, and therefore can go no further: we cannot have life in ourselves

unless we could also be gods: but we have it *in* Him, and He is it in us—"A fountain of living water, springing up into everlasting life." Mysterious identity—yet true as God is true. "That they may be one, even as we are one:" "I in them, and they in me, that they be made perfect in one."

CHAPTER IV.

IN HIS JUSTIFYING RIGHTEOUSNESS.

"SACRIFICE and offering thou wouldest not; but a body hast thou prepared me. In burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo! I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, O God." Few words are used to tell how man was lost: a brief and easy process: one guilty wish, the frightful train was fired, and all was over. The covenant of works was ended,—I was going to say, for ever: but it is more than I know. Perhaps not: perhaps when the work of redemption is completed, and the body of Christ entire: and He shall give up the mediatorial kingdom to the Father, "Having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven:" resting a second time from all his works which he has created and made, it may be—I pretend not to know what has not been revealed—but it *may be*, that on an earth recovered from the curse, the first covenant will be renewed, and the first purpose of the Creator be made manifest in the felicity of a faithful and obedient manhood: standing, as angels do, where others fell; witnesses for God before the

universe, that to fall was no necessity of man's first condition. "Behold I create a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." To me it is as hard to conceive an unaccomplished purpose in the divine mind, as it is to believe God ever purposed evil. Meantime the cherubim were set: the flaming sword was turning every way, to guard the tree of life for ever from the fallen, and close the source of life for ever from the dead: there was no remedy but in Jehovah's purpose. "I looked and there was none to help: and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me." Unbelief asks, why redeem at so much cost, a debt which it was at the pleasure of the creditor to remit; and why purchase a pardon that might have been granted freely. We have remarked elsewhere, how much more was wanted than a pardon—"That God might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth." Could devils be pardoned, they would be devils still, and sinners only pardoned, would be like them. Forgive the dead, forget the lost, let alone the miserable: yes, doubtless that would have been a very easy thing to Him, who from the very stones could raise up children, obedient children to himself. Job in the writhing anguish of his soul proposed this method of forgiveness. "Let me alone, for my days are vanity. What is man that thou shouldst magnify him, and that thou shouldst set thy heart upon him, and that thou shouldst visit him every morning, and try him every moment?" . . . "And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity, for now shall I sleep in the dust, and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be." The natural heart never conceived or asked for more,

than to be rid of God and of his wrath together: "How long wilt thou not depart from me, and let me alone?" It is all that man likes of the Gospel of reconciliation when proposed, and all that without the Spirit's influence he can be persuaded to accept: to be let alone, to be excused, to be forgiven and forgotten; to be allowed to live in earthliness and die in peace; to have leave to be as miserable as sin and vanity have made us, and bound our vision by the dust, where we shall sleep, and the morning when we shall not be. But how beautiful is the reply of the Almighty by Elihu to Job—"Deliver him from going down into the pit, for I have found a ransom for him. His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth: he shall pray unto God and he will be favourable unto him, and he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man His righteousness." Made sin that we might be made righteousness. The transmutation is so simple as God states it: may I say, as God does it? I suppose I may; for simplicity is the loftiest attribute of power in word or deed: ingenuity pertains only to littleness; complicating means and contrivances for the attainment of its ends. What slew that pure and spotless Lamb of God, the sinner's ransom, substitute, and representative? Not the Roman tribunal nor the Jewish accusation: not Caiaphas, and Pilate, and Iscariot: they were but the machinery of the law; ill-willed and ill-designing executioners of Almighty justice. "Ye could have no power over me except it were given you of my Father." What brought the law's vengeance on a head so pure, the wrath of a Father on a head so loved? Sin. It was sin, not sinners, that crucified the Christ, and slew the Lord of life. And where

did He get it, that "holy thing," "who did no wrong neither was guile found in his mouth:" pure, undefiled, and separate from sinners, from the first moment of his conception by the Spirit in a virgin mother's womb? Do we think the Judge eternal found nothing worthy of death in him when he suffered the corrupt tribunal to execute its sentence? Do we think the heavenly Father saw nothing offensive in Him, when He turned away, and like the false ones of the earth, forsook the innocent sufferer in his hour of need? This is impossible: for although the Almighty delegates his power to the unjust and the unrighteous, it is only as the executors of his righteous judgments. "The Lord had laid on him the iniquity of us all:" and then that holy eye, too pure to behold iniquity, was forced away, shunning to gaze on the foul mass through which He must behold his best beloved; and then "it pleased Him," who will by no means clear the guilty, to suffer the execution of the law; and to let the unjust do the work of justice, by inflicting the chastisement of transgression upon one in whom He, not they, found something worthy of death. Men did not, for they could not, convict Jesus of any sin, "Because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit found in his mouth." The judge found no fault in him: the accusers knew the falsehood of their own charges: the betrayer knew the price of innocent blood was in his hand: the thief who died with him bore witness that he had done nothing amiss: and the heathen who guarded him confessed that he was righteous. The companions of his pure and spotless life, having heard nothing but truth and wisdom from his lips, seen nothing but goodness and virtue in his actions, were astounded, as well they might,

to see such a one led as a sheep to the slaughter; charged with crime, arraigned, convicted, executed, without an interposing voice from earth or heaven to prove his innocence and save him. There was a moment—there seems to have been a moment—when even He, the sufferer, stood amazed at his affliction, and asked his Father, "Why?" The Father, and the Father only, saw the guilt upon the victim: saw the transgressor in the sufferer, the sinner in the crucified: "He bare the sin of many"—it is not said the *punishment*, but the *sin*. "The Lord hath made the iniquity of us all to meet on him." (Margin.) He beheld it there, and hated it there; and turned away to let it bide its retribution there: even there, upon the head of his own, his best-beloved. Stay venturous sinners—jesters and compromisers, and triflers about sin—stay and contemplate the simple fact, as every Christian professes to believe it: for though my present object is not to exhibit the nature and consequences of sin, I cannot pass it without a thought. He to whom judgment is his strange work—never so strange as then: who willeth not the death of the sinner, the vilest, the most impenitent sinner, by reason of the pity and loving-kindness that is in Him: when by imputation, by willing assumption, by eternal purpose and consent between them, He, this righteous Father, saw his righteous Son, clothed as it were with a garment spotted with the flesh, and laden with the transgression which He abhors, He turned his head and looked aside, while they did to him whatsoever they listed. It is all He needs to do to us. Let him look aside and leave us: there are enemies enough to do the rest: sin, death, and hell, want nothing but permission to finish their own work; and pass the guilty

from hand to hand; as Caiaphas passed the blessed Lamb to Pilate, and Pilate to the soldiers, and the soldiers to the cross. Will He not leave us? Will He bear to behold in us what He could not look upon while it lay upon his most blessed Son? Will He interpose for us, when He would not stay the sword that arose against the man that was his fellow, until justice was satisfied, and sin removed? "Let him deliver him if He will have him," "If He delight in him." He would not have him, he could not delight in him, till the imputed sin that was upon him was removed; taken out of the way, nailed to his cross—laid with him in the grave—out of sight and out of mind. "The iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, but there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found." But He, who on the cross delivered not Jesus, will never interpose his power or his love for us, while we remain under the charge, the imputation, the condemnation and penalty of sin? Rather say, "Blessed is the man, whose sin is covered."

Our hearts have gone before our words in search of the beautiful converse of this most wonderful transaction. Like some I have seen, working behind their frame in what seemed an intricate and purposeless confusion, to produce a most exquisite picture on the reverse side,—we have only, as it were, to turn our canvas, and behold the believer justified, the sinner righteous—"That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Already, perhaps, our hearts have overflowed with grateful joy, perceiving how the Almighty Father, who could see iniquity where He had laid it, although no one else could find it, may see righteousness where He imputes it, albeit there is none:

how He who could not see the innocence of the condemned through the likeness of sinful flesh he had assumed, may not see the guilt of the acquitted through the robe of righteousness He gives us to put on. "He hath not seen iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel."

As separate from ourselves as guilt was from that precious Lamb of God; as incommunicable, as underivable to the fleshly nature, as sin was to the nature of that pure and holy One; is the righteousness by which a sinner stands justified before God. Jesus was not sinful when He died for sin: the iniquity that was laid on Him never became His; the transgressions that were imputed to Him were not done of Him, or conceived by Him, or possible to Him: he died under the imputation simply of another's guilt. I perceive no flaw in the comparison, no break in the parallel. The believer is justified by imputation only of another's merit, the righteousness of that most righteous One: not inherent, not imparted, not exacted: not something given us to do, or assigned for us to be, or required of us to become; for it is that which the creature cannot have, which the purest angels have not—"the righteousness of God:" a meritorious righteouness; a life-giving, life-deserving, life-securing righteousness; as incommunicable to our nature as death-deserving, soul-destroying sin to his. Wearily and painfully as through his years of manhood He bare that abhorrent and unnatural burthen, increasing perhaps continually its agonizing pressure, until it broke his guileless heart, it made no change in him: Jesus on the cross was pure and spotless as the babe of Bethlehem: the marred, and wasted, and stripe-stricken body, was as incorrupt when they laid it in the Ari-

mathean's tomb, as when the holy mother carried it in her bosom: and Jesus went as He came, the holy one of God. Years pass over the justified believer's head: we may suppose him chosen and regenerate, even from the womb, and brought into life full clothed with the Saviour's merits; he may grow up thence in grace, and walk in the light of God's countenance threescore years and ten; bear fruit of the Spirit a hundred times a hundred fold; and having lived obedient and rejoicing, may die triumphant and assured: but he will have no more meritorious righteousness at last than he had at first: he will have acquired no propriety in that which he enjoys—he will have gained no ownership in that which is imputed to him: in the matter of justification he will fall asleep in Jesus, as he came to life in Adam—a hell-deserving, miserable sinner in himself; justified and accepted in the imputed righteousness of Christ; and when in the power of that righteousness, he shall rise again to judgment, the tribunal of heaven will find as Pilate found—nothing—nothing in the saved deserving of life, as he found nothing in the Saviour deserving of death. Alas! it need not wait the decision of heaven's tribunal. We have supposed a case, but it has scarcely any existence. Drawing from the life, we should produce a far different picture. We should commonly find the young disciple, born into the family of God before he knows himself, growing up in a cold habitude of religion, without any of its fervours; loving but little, because he knows not the amount of sin forgiven; indifferently thankful, because the debt was paid before he counted it; a stranger to the hardness of the rock whence he was hewn, and the darkness of the pit whence he was taken: too fearless of the

world he never knew—too venturesome in the sin whose bitterness he never tasted—too brave with the tempter whose bondage never galled him. Generally speaking, we find such early converts do very indifferently the work of faith, and contend very feebly for the hope that is in them; making light of their own corruption, and proportionately light of the precious blood that saves them. The world finds nothing in them but a habit and profession of religion: and they find nothing in themselves but chillness, half-heartedness, and sterility: the Father finds much to pity, much to contend with, to bear with and forgive, but nothing, absolutely nothing meritorious: poor usury for such early gifts and graces, but no ransom money to quit a single claim, or make compensation for a single sin. Or let grace find the sinner midway on his course, earthly, sensual, devilish—full of vanity, full of folly, full of self; and put upon him the garment of salvation, the seamless, spotless robe of Jesus' merits. How will he, for the most part, wear it, and become it? Between past sins and present inconsistencies, the world wonders, as well it may, what God can find acceptable in such a one; why he should call himself a child of God, in whom Satan has reigned so long, and still conflicts so stoutly: but wonders less than he does. Ask him what he finds for justification in himself. Tears of anguish for sins he cannot conquer—strong cries and groans for prayers he cannot utter—daily offences where he loves intensely; unbelief and dishonour where he trusts, confides, adores. The wayward heart, swelling alternately with joy and grief, with the sense of pardon and the sense of sin; now broken with benefits, and now with rods; finds nothing in itself at last that was not there at first; except an

ever-growing mass of hateful and hated sin, out-grown by still accumulating mercies: the winding-sheet and swathing clothes are both alike, and the soul goes to God as it was born of God, clothed with Christ as with a garment; sole cover of its nakedness: "Blessed is the man whose iniquity is hidden, whose sin is covered."

We paused that we might learn fear, in beholding the consequences of imputed sin; how revolting it could make the best beloved; how shunned, refused, abandoned, it once made the dearest and most delighted in. We may pause now to learn hope, and confidence and and joy in beholding the wonderful reverse. Through the imputed righteousness of Christ, the Father can look with complacency on the vilest sinner, the worthless, graceless, beautiless creature, who shrinks with horror from the vision of himself. The Most Holy can set his eye without disgust upon loathsomeness, deformity, and disease: his heart upon the base, the degraded, and the lost. He can do it, and He does. When Job lies in dust and ashes, upbraided and despised, a hatred and an abhorrence to himself: when Jonah, too dangerous company for man, is delivered to the tender mercies of the deep: in the deeper, darker waters, where the contrite and the broken-hearted have only just light enough to behold their miseries, just faith enough to cry "unclean, unclean:" while the world looks suspiciously on our mental anguish, and whispers, "Surely this man is a sinner," and devils answer, "God has forsaken him, persecute and take him," one only eye looks with complacency upon a vision that no human love, not even self-love, can out-live, and calls it "beautiful," "Perfect through my comeliness, that I have put upon thee, saith the Lord God." (Ezek.) "To this man will

I look." "The heart of the contrite is his delight." There is no name of love he has not called it by: the place of his rest, the sacrifice that he has chosen.

For caprice, for arbitrary fancy, to love a thing unlovely, and delight himself in what all creatures abhor? No: but because he sees there what the creature cannot: what the world cannot at all discern, and even faith cannot always realize: "The Lord our righteousness." The Father sees in us what once for our sakes he could not see in Jesus;—"His beloved Son in whom he is well pleased." Not his likeness—He will see that hereafter, and love it for its own intrinsic loveliness: but this is an after-work, and we must first be perfected. What God sees now in the justified believer, is not the resemblance, but the reality: not the feeble and faint imitation of Christ's righteousness, but itself, in all its perfectness, and its infinity, as He imputes it to us. "He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness; as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels." Well may the prophet add, and every believing heart respond, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." No self-condemned and self-renouncing sinner need stay the song one hour beyond the time, when by faith he takes the blessing to himself.

Holy Scripture calls variously this act of faith—man's share in this most wonderful transaction: to "come to Christ," to "put on Christ," to "receive Christ," to be "found in Christ." I call it 'man's share,' although we know it comes not of himself, because unlike to justifying righteousness, the faith that is said to justify is something imparted: the gift of God indeed; but a

gift conveys proprietorship: the imparted principle becomes our own, is required of us and to be exercised by us: it is something that we must have, and something that we must do, instrumentally, not meritoriously, in order to salvation. Hence we speak of being justified by faith; as though that were done by faith which we have seen to be done only by the imputation of Christ's righteousness. We need not confuse ourselves, though perhaps we often do, by using, as the scripture does, the same word for both operations; there are many exemplifications of the difference in the common transactions and common language of life, whereby no confusion arises in the understanding. We know what the practitioner means who says *he* has cured certain diseases with a certain medicine: and what the husbandman intends, in saying *he* can make the herbage grow by watering: in either case it is not the acting agent does it, further than by application of what is placed within his power; the medicine or the water produces the result. "Justification is by faith that it may be of grace." Faith is neither the producing nor the procuring cause of salvation: it did not induce that precious blood-shedding, neither does it give virtue to it in the using. Had Jesus not merited salvation and bestowed it freely, there never had been faith in any human bosom. We must beware of erecting faith into a work, and offering it to God, as something meritorious of our own. It is not faith he takes in lieu of all: it is not faith that clothes our nakedness and hides our shame: this were but another mode of purchase: and it is one that Satan likes especially: certain to trouble with it the believer's course, if he cannot draw him off. For then he sets us to consider how much faith will do;

and since we have no gage to measure with, we can never know if we have faith enough. Be sure we have not enough, if that be it: if we had faith to remove mountains, it could not remove one sin from off the guilty soul, by any power or value that is in it. When Jesus said to the woman, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace," if faith, or love, or the spikenard very precious, or all united, could pay the hundred or the fifty pence, she had not been "frankly forgiven." Faith only saved her by bringing her to Jesus. And when he said to another, "Thy faith hath made thee whole," the healing virtue was not in the faith: it was where in faith she sought it: "If I can but touch the hem of his garment, I shall be clean." Thus while it is affirmed so many times in Scripture, that the sinner is justified by faith, faith is no more than the hand put forth to receive the free gift of salvation by the justifying righteousness of Christ: it is neither that gift itself, nor the price of it, nor the desert of it: it is no question therefore of more or less, enough or too little; as if God were making a bargain with us. This is what we do with him in every thing,—to see how little he will take of all that he lays claim to: and we think He is even such a one as ourselves. If He ask our heart, we offer him a part of it—our time, we think a seventh day too much —miserable hagglers as we are. Our Master deals not so —He bought indeed, but He sells not: his offer is "Ask and receive"—"seek and find"—"believe and be ye saved." Is that all? the hard incredulous heart replies, Can faith save us? No, but it is the method by which Christ will save and does save all that by it come to him. Nay, more—it is the earnest of salvation, and a part of it: and never separated from it; as much of

grace, as free and priceless to ourselves, as every other part: "He that believeth on the Son hath life."

There is a distinction necessary to be made between saving faith, by which a soul is justified in Christ, and that faith by which miracles were used to be wrought, and supernatural communications received, or other specific acts performed in obedience to specific commands and promises: all gifts of the same Spirit, but diverse from saving faith, in that either could be received and exercised without the other. Balaam had faith to receive prophetic communications, and Judas no doubt had faith to work miracles: but neither had saving faith. Doubtless of the former kind Jesus spake, when He reproached his disciples with not being able to cast out devils, because of their unbelief: of the latter perhaps, when He said, "Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?" If we might take a similar distinction between the faith that justifies in Christ, and the faith by which the justified walk and act, which yet are inseparable, we might find reason for our Lord's reproaches on both counts; on one for our fears, on the other for our failures: and reason for the never-ceasing prayer, "Lord, increase our faith:" the measure of our faith being constantly the measure of our confidence and capability, though not of our security. This may be an unnecessary distinction to the experienced believer: but not so to the clouded or the troubled mind; and not so to a cavilling and gainsaying world. It is thought, I believe, by those who prefer the hard bondage of the law, that justification by faith is the believer's invention, of a cheap and easy way to save himself. An easy way it is—"My yoke is easy and my burden light," and a cheap way it is, "Buy of me wine

and milk, without money and without price:" but not to save ourselves: if that were to be done by faith, it would be harder than the deeds of the law: for however adverse obedience may be to the fleshly nature, faith is more adverse still: the natural man will do great things, any thing, every thing, rather than wash in Jordan: while in the kingdom of grace, whatever our short-comings in duty may be, our short-comings in faith are more. Of the bitter things every penitent believer writes against himself, the bitterest of all are the failings of his faith.

If he therefore that believeth is justified from all things, from which he could not be justified by the deeds of the law; it is not because there is more merit in faith than works; or because he has more perfectly fulfilled the condition. Alas! he knows he has not; he knows he cannot; and many a timid saint goes wearily and sadly all his days from misapprehension of this doctrine; looking at his own faith, instead of by faith to Jesus; as a frightened child seeks safety in its own feeble grasp upon the powerful arm that holds it: and he does thus as really and truly commit his salvation to himself, although he does not intend it, and suffers all the uneasiness consequent upon so doing, as if he worked for it; not perceiving the difference Almighty love has made between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace. In the former, nothing is promised but to perfection; whereby it is of debt, and he who transgresseth in one point is guilty of the whole: in the latter, all is promised to no more than the grain of mustard-seed, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God, whereby it is of grace. Where is it written, "If ye have faith enough?" If any man believe long enough—believe firmly enough? Is it not

rather written, "He that believeth is justified from all things," "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be ye saved." Say, faith is the key by which the treasury of grace is unlocked:—say it is the door by which the sanctuary of grace is entered: it is not the treasury, still less the treasure: these are the all-sufficient Saviour, and the boundless inexhaustible merits of his death. If we would be sure of our salvation, let us measure these; let us count these, and lose heart if there be not found enough. We properly say we are justified by believing, as we say we are fed by eating; nevertheless we are not nourished by eating but by the food eaten; which though we ate it not, would still be food, wholesome nutritious food, while we remained unfed: whereas should we choose to feed on husks! as alas! so many do: there would prove to be little efficacy in the exercise of eating. So it is in the exercise of faith: there is much faith that does not, and cannot justify; much even of strong, and ardent, and self-denying faith: but in that it feeds on husks and not on Christ, it can neither nourish the soul nor save it. We hear of believing in ordinances, believing in Sacraments, believing in the church for justification: and if the strength of the confidence would do, it seems often to exceed that of the believer in Christ: but the soul is not, and cannot be justified thereby. I have trembled sometimes, for the deception, when I have heard strong and fervent faith in a dubious path commended and relied upon. God knows his own gracious purposes, and how much error may consist with truth, and how much simplicity of the principle with duplicity of words: we know only this, that faith justifies by application of the justifying blood and righteousness of Christ, and not

by any virtue or power of its own : and we cannot therefore perceive how the exercise of faith upon any thing else whatever, can make the soul acceptable to God, or be a safe ground of confidence before Him. It is a momentous consideration, because we hear in these days of a great many things being done by faith, or which might be done, if only faith were strong enough. Doubtless, but not to the justification of the sinner in the ways proposed. We are told of a parent's power by faith in baptism to save a child : of the church's power to absolve its members by vicarious faith : of the believer's power to avoid sickness, suffering and death, by the exercise of faith. Truly, faith has done many things, and might do more ; whatever God has commanded, faith may do ; whatever God has promised, faith may lay hold of. Heretofore it has subdued kingdoms, and put to flight the armies of the aliens ; it has stopped the mouths of lions, and quenched the violence of fire ; healed the sick and raised the dead, and done many other supernatural works : and we dispute not that it might again, if God appointed and required it : but one thing it never has done and it cannot do—save a lost soul, or justify a sinner in any way but by application of the blood of Christ, by acceptance of his atonement, and reliance upon his merits.

CHAPTER V.

IN OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO HIM.

We know where the cavilling heart will next be found, constant in nothing but resistance to the truth. Baffled in our attempts to keep the law without the faith of Christ; and failing to fulfil the terms we think too easy, of being saved by faith without the law,—human perversity will change its ground, and presently reversing the objection, pleads that a man is not master of his convictions, or responsible for his nature; that he should be called upon to believe against the one, or act contrary to the other. If human nature be as incompetent to believe as to do the will of God, the Gospel is of no more value to him than the Law: without faith he cannot please, without grace he cannot believe; the easier path does thus indeed become the harder; since a man is less master of his mind, than he is of his actions; and while a walk of pure obedience cannot be maintained, the walk of faith cannot be so much as entered upon without God's special grace: the wide gate leadeth to destruction; the straight gate is closed against us. I put it so, because Satan puts it so; a snare and a stumbling-block to many; to the fearful as well as to the wilful; to some who are seeking, as well as to those who are resisting, the truth. It is a diffi-

cult subject, and we have no new light to throw upon it; but it is a subject in which simplicity will do more than wisdom, and experience more than argument, and common sense more than learning, and submission more than all. I should like if I could, to undraw the bars and bolts that learning and argument and philosophy have drawn athwart that narrow entrance-gate, and see if simplicity and submission would be at any loss. A little child, If I said to him, Yonder is the door, there is no outside latch or key; but go and knock, and one within will open it, would want no more direction. Nay, if, without direction, he saw others passing, and had a mind to enter, he would knock at a venture, and scarcely cease if he were bidden. Simple as this is, it is no simpler than God's truth. But were the child a man, a reasoning, thinking man, he would stand still and gaze upon the gate, and say, 'Since it is closed it cannot be a thoroughfare; my business lies that way, and I should like to pass; but if it were free to all, there would be a means of opening it on the outside: many have gone in while I have been standing here: but they have a privilege, no doubt, to enter.' The reasoning is good, and the conclusion just; he would walk away, and nobody would blame him. But suppose there were written in legible words upon that gate, "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you," and the reasoner, still pausing at the threshold, should thus commune with himself—'Within is private property: it is well known that none may enter without leave: the company is few and chosen, and admitted simply by favour from within. I am unacquainted and perhaps unknown to them that keep the door,—I will not knock.' Is the reasoning still good and the conclusion

just? and if the man goes away, shall we not say, that either he had no great mind to enter, or he was too proud to ask permission? Verily the poor ignorant child who could not so much as read perhaps its warrant to knock, doing by its own common sense what it saw others succeed in doing, would gain admission; while the reasoning reader was excluded. "Except ye become as a little child," saith the Scriptures,—a child in action as in knowledge,—in submission as in simplicity. We know but too well what reasoning, and thinking, and arguing have done; what the pious as well as the impious have helped to do, to make difficult what God has made plain; by restriction of the persons addressed, and description of the persons to be admitted; qualifications, and conditions, and times, and seasons, and modes and manner of application; till —they have barred and bolted and rivetted that door, that blest, that free, that hospitable door, as far as man can do it; till they have done everything but efface from it that blessed sentence—"Knock and it shall be opened." When redeeming love prevailed to write that invitation, He wrote it on behalf of all mankind, and earth and hell cannot prevail to blot it. Whatever limitation, whatever contingencies or conditions there may be in the promises of the Gospel, they are not there; they are not in the warrant written upon the gate, where whosoever enters shall be saved. We know there is no power without to open—but there is power and willingness within: more willingness than He finds when it is He that waits, and knocks to enter if any man will open. The figure is reversed, but the lesson is the same: the first movement of reconciliation cannot come from man, and does not in either

case. Unsought, unsolicited, undesired in the first place, our Master bids us to his door, and comes himself to ours; He finds not our door open till he knocks: we cannot enter his door till He opens; and yet there is something that we are to do and must do. He waits without, He waits within: "Waiting to be gracious." One thing at least we can do, and daily prove we can: we can hear his gracious messages and understand them, and deliberate upon them, and refuse. Is this with us or him? Common sense can answer the question, if metaphysics cannot, and experience prove it, though arguments may fail. To them who find the path of faith so easy, and yet fulfil it not, because as they say, they are not masters of their own convictions; to them we say, 'Do you believe your unbelief to be an evil? Cannot you do as much as devils can —"Believe and tremble?" Then you have capability enough, for you have what devils have not,—a throne of mercy and a day of grace.' "Ask and ye shall receive." If nature is capable, as I suppose it is, of giving so much credit to God's word, as to know that faith is necessary to salvation, and can say with him of old, "Help thou mine unbelief!"—although the previous profession "Lord, I believe," cannot be added to the prayer, man is surely responsible for his want of saving faith, notwithstanding it is the gift of God, free of all power in ourselves to work it. That human nature is incapable of receiving the testimony of God in any sense, appears to me a position quite untenable, and adverse alike to experience and common sense: "Ye receive witness of men, the witness of God is greater." No reasonable being doubts that his natural faculties are competent to the examination and reception of testimony:

and there is more satisfactory testimony of the authenticity of Holy Scripture, than of any other book: beside, persons who thus argue against their own free agency of mind, do commonly admit the Bible to be true, even while they maintain their own incompetency to believe it. It is not a part of my design to prove the authenticity of the Bible, but only the capability of mankind to appreciate its authenticity, and their consequent responsibility for a right judgment respecting it. If this authority be admitted, we say not that man is competent to the appreciation and reception of its spiritual import—its high and holy mysteries; we say not that he can apply them to his heart, and believe to the saving of his soul. But as a rational being, he is competent to receive as matters of fact the things related therein; and doing so, to act upon his conviction by following the directions therein given. "And how much more will He not refuse his Holy Spirit to them that ask it." Do we thus invalidate the freeness of Divine grace? No: grace gave the Book: and brings us within hearing of it: grace wrought the blessed truths the Book contains, and gave the day of probationary proclamation of them: most free and sovereign grace: for man had no more asked redemption than deserved it, had not God himself proposed it: prepared in grace before the world began. Forbearing grace, restraining grace, remonstrating grace, are as much the purchase of the Saviour's blood, as saving and regenerating grace: the Spirit that strives with man is as much the free gift of God as the Spirit that sanctifies him. If these benefits, or any of them, be granted to us, they are bought by the sacrifice of the blood of Christ, shed to this extent at least for all mankind:

and bringing all into a condition of responsibility for the using or refusing of them.

Through Christ, the law of the Gospel, the law of recovery is made known; the faith and obedience which every creature owes to its Creator, obliges all who hear to believe and to obey it: and by it, all will righteously be judged, although they be not saved. If this should seem a mere abstract proposition, useless in effect however true, since men cannot or will not without further aid, obey the Gospel and be saved: it is very easily reduceable from doctrinal and abstract, to practical and experimental truth, by bringing it home to the individual conscience—to our own conscience. Watch the actings of the mind for a day—a week—a year. We have the Bible, but we have not read it: could we not have read it? We read, but did not understand: could we not have used means to help our understanding, as we do in other studies? We understood, but we did not believe: could we not have sought further evidence, internal and external, to confirm the word, and satisfy our doubts? No more power is wanting for all this than we exercise on other matters every day, and succeed in so doing to attain our object. But it may be, that we did read, we understood, we credited, but we could not obey. Even so: our natural capability ends there: and our responsibility might possibly end with it, if no remedy had been exhibited. But if we have read, understood and credited, the word of God; how is it that we know not what to do, wanting the power to obey it? It is written there in sun-bright letters: "Ask." Can you not ask? I return not now to the doctrinal difficulty, whether unrenewed nature can pray acceptably—can pray effectually—can pray

aright, or pray at all without the Holy Spirit; more fully to be considered in a future chapter. It is practically and experimentally true, that we can address ourselves to God for that of which we stand in need; as to any other potentate, with whose existence and power, and good disposition towards us, we are made acquainted; and we can persist in asking—ask and ask again. I say not if this be acceptable prayer, or believing prayer, or prayer in the Spirit; but I say that until we have done this, and done it perseveringly, and done it to our life's end, we have not done all we can, and terminated our responsibility. Where is the man that has so asked the Holy Spirit and has not received it? Theoretically we could easily produce such a one: we could prove his existence by strict logical deduction; but we have never found him: we shall not find him before the judgment-seat of God: it is not on that side we shall hear it said, "I called and ye refused: I stretched out my hand, and none regarded."

There is a state of sin without responsibility; the state, for instance, of an unconscious child. Original sin, inborn, incipient—or, as it has been quaintly called, "birth-sin," is possibly that of which St. Paul is speaking, when he says, "Without the law, sin was dead:" it had been, as it were, slain, by the power of the woman's holy seed, against this first-born of the serpent's progeny; a guilt imputed without commission; derived without consent; incurred without consciousness, pertaining by the first Adam to every child of earth, but remitted by the second Adam on behalf of all; until it breaks forth, "revives" as the Apostle speaks; comes to life and light in actual transgression against the law. Coming into the world in the image of the earthly, and giv-

ing almost immediate evidence of inborn corruption, we believe that by the imputed righteousness of Christ, the dying infant is pure nevertheless, and spotless in the Father's sight, and departs in the image of the heavenly: and, though we cannot mark the time, most mercifully concealed, when the living child becomes responsible, I see no reason why it should be capable of wilful transgression, before it is capable of faith and repentance. If this be the case, there is no age at which a child of wrath may not be justified and saved in Christ: and, therefore, none in which he is not consenting to his own condemnation: a responsible agent in his own destruction.

We know that the difficulty will return upon us: and so it must, remove it as we will; for the last link of the mysterious chain is in the secrecy of Jehovah's counsels; it is enough that the nether end be so lowered to our reach, that the plainest understanding may lay hold of it and be saved. Man tries to throw upon his Maker the responsibility of actual as well as original sin, as being the necessary product of an implanted root: the harvest of a field he did not sow, the fruit of a tree he never planted: how can he be responsible for the evil doings of his evil nature? "Can the leopard change his spots, or the Ethiop his skin?" how then shall he who is accustomed to do evil, and formed to do evil, and incompetent to a good word or a good thought, how shall he be required or expected to do well? "Why hast thou made me thus?" Would this were the language of hardened infidelity alone: but as we have found it in respect of faith, so it is in respect of obedience also: iniquity, like unbelief, is made its own excuse, and our corruption is pleaded in extenuation of

itself. 'God made us so, or if He did not, our first father did: we cannot help it: we are all sinners,' is the language of every self-justifying soul. It might possibly have been true, had there been no plan of redemption; but, before we charge our condition upon our Maker, let us be warned that our first father had the promise, before he brought forth seed under the curse; there never was for fallen man a law without a Gospel: a sentence to condemn the sinner born, without a sacrifice to save him. "He made skins of beasts to cover them" before ever there was one born naked and ashamed: the first that had no worthiness of his own to offer, was instructed in what would be accepted for him in his stead.

Blind parents sometimes beget their children blind: they cannot help it; we offer them no reproaches that they do not see; and not seeing, do not know what sight reveals, or do what requires sight. But if a way be known by which sight can be restored, and while they are yet blind, a hand be outheld to lead them to it, and they begin to say, 'Nay, but I was born blind: my parents were blind also:—darkness is natural to me; it is no fault of mine. I have no taste for the pleasures of sight, or liability to its duties. I do not wish to see:' should we not find such a one as answerable for his want of sight as if he had wilfully extinguished it? As responsible for every duty he could not perform, every want and misery he inflicted or incurred, as if the incapacity were at first of his own choosing? This is that lowered chain, that lowest link, on which the feeblest intellect, the weakest hand may seize, while the most powerful would try in vain, to trace its farthest issues; and speculate in vain, why sovereign foreknowledge did not interfere to stay the mischief at its begin-

ning, or sovereign mercy now to bring it to an end. "Even so, Lord, for so it seemeth good to thee."

"If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things." Things earthly, things cognisable to the earthly, to which earthly faculties are sufficient, have been made known; if we receive them not, no wonder that the mysteries of religion are in vain presented, or in judgment hidden from us; if we receive them, they will lead us right. They led Nicodemus right. He came in his unregenerate nature, to make enquiry of Jesus; not as God, not as the Messiah, he does not seem to have recognized him in that character, but as a teacher come from God, of which he accepted his miracles as an evidence. Nicodemus acted upon a reasonable conclusion, an exercise of natural understanding upon external evidence: "No man can do the miracles thou doest, unless God be with him:" and if God were with him, what he taught must be of God. Little indeed was the master in Israel prepared to hear, to understand or to believe, what Jesus told him: it seemed impossible: it was impossible to man: but the wind passed over the honest enquirer meantime, and it was done: the Son of Man was lifted up, and he believed. They that persecuted, condemned and crucified the Son of Man, had as much evidence of his truth as Nicodemus had, and might have done as he did. We can all do as he did. We cannot go to Christ with saving faith, and repentance in our hearts: "No man can come unto me except the Father draw him." We cannot own Christ as *our* Saviour and Redeemer, God and Lord: "No man can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." But we can do all that the master in Israel did; did by

night—secretly, doubtingly, fearful, half-hearted, and ashamed. If we have not done so, if we will not do so, are we not answerable? This we should not say of Nicodemus, if, after hearing and acknowledging what he did, he had appeared against his teacher at Pilate's judgment-seat. "But if ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who shall commit to your trust the true riches?" If you have not used your natural faculties for that to which they are perfectly competent, why should the mysteries of the glorious Gospel be laid open to you? Alas! it is not at the beginning only the Gospel has to meet the wilful, the responsible, the guilty resistance of the natural heart. If man is a free consenting agent while he serves the powers of darkness, he is a free consenting agent likewise under the leading of the Holy Spirit. How free, alas! sometimes to be found fighting against the Spirit, against the word, against himself: how free with his Master's name upon him, to be found serving in the enemies' ranks, or carousing in the enemies' tents: to be missing in the field, in the house, at the table! Perhaps the wilful resistence of the natural heart is in no way more fully proved, than by what remains of it in a state of grace: as the deep-seated malignity of disease is developed in the slowness and difficulty of recovery. The fleshly nature, that without grace takes refuge in necessity, as a passive victim of untoward fate: when grace is received, discovers its independence, by active opposition to it. A few Christians I have met with, who hold themselves irresponsible still: and grieving perhaps the Holy Spirit within them, and sinning from day to day against their holy calling in Christ Jesus, do still say they cannot help it; it is

Satan—it is the old Adam—it is God—they do not mean so, but to this their words amount: it is God, who gives them not sufficient grace to overcome their enemies. I believe they do not perceive the result of their own argument; for if the principle were to be carried out, believers would make themselves from first to last such mere machinery, as to be incapable of contracting any guilt; while from day to day they are asking pardon and remission for it, as if it were their own. Is it not another instance of the practical simplicity of truth's most inexplicable mysteries, that the very disputant who argues against his own free will, till, whether working together with the Spirit by grace, or in opposition to it by nature, he would seem to think himself as irresponsible as childhood or idiotcy, falls down before his Maker in his closet, and forgetting his argumentative conclusions in the deep anguish of a burthened and a broken heart, lays claim to every sin he has committed from his birth to the present hour: and mourns the weight and owns the shame, and asks mercy in the name of Jesus, as for guilt and misery that are all his own. Why? because he feels it so: feels the things that he has done are things he need not have done; the things he has left undone, are what he might have done.

The remembrance, why so grevious? The burden, why so intolerable? "Pardon mine iniquity, O Lord, for it is great." The iniquity of his birth-right? The sin of his nature? Original, derived, imputed sin? No: there never was but One that felt the weight of sin which was not his; the shame without the guilt, the agony without the consciousness of evil. True, there is a sense in which the believer's sins are not his own, for they have been made over to another: he has dipped

them in the blood of the dove that was slain; he has laid them on the head of the dove that was let go; they have been borne off to a land unknown, where neither an accusing angel nor an accusing conscience can find them, to claim them for him, and say that they are his. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." But it is then, exactly then, when the sinner stands by, and sees his substitute charged, convicted, sacrificed; when the debtor looks on, while the accumulated sum is counted in drops of mortal anguish from a guiltless forehead; it is then, and then only, that he knows, because he feels, the whole weight of responsibility to be his own; lays claim to the vileness inherited of his fathers, and abhors —not his nature, his destiny, his condition, but himself. And oh! to be so ransomed, so forgiven! I do not like to say what pardoned sinners feel: hearts are so different: but I think that he to whom the five hundred was forgiven, did not try to persuade himself he owed but fifty, and was overcharged the rest; and she who loved much for much forgiven, did not plead with her love against the extortionate requital. No, the full hatred the believer gives himself, the full love that he gives and likes to give his Saviour, speaks truth in the heart while the lips dispute it: and hearts that grow stout in argument against their own responsibility, in secret lie crushed and broken beneath the weight of it.

True, there are sins—unconsented to, resisted, hated sins, of which St. Paul could say, and every believer with him, "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." "Without are fightings, within are fears," says the same Apostle. In the long conflict with external temptation and indwelling sin, in which the re-

generated nature is engaged, not against Christ, but with Christ against the world, the devil, and the flesh, our wounds, our falls, our discomfitures, and disgraces, are oftentimes but the disasters of a warfare which is the very test and condition of our discipleship, and our preparation for the world to come. Many a sinful thought, as abhorrent to ourselves as to Him who made us, and has pity on us for it: many a temptation of the evil one, that tortures the soul it cannot subjugate; many a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, which must be endured, because it cannot be overcome; the offspring all of inbred sin, are the guiltless miseries of the unconsenting and resisting soul, wherein He that made us remembers of what we are made, and has pity on us that we are but dust.

Happy is he who, when overcome by sins resisted, when borne down and put to shame by sins unconquered, can truly say, "It is no more I that do it"—it is not my too venturous approaches to temptation—it is not my self-confidence and insobriety, and too much connivance in the world's practices and opinions, that exposes me to be defeated by the evil that I would not, and brought into captivity to the sin that I allow not.

CHAPTER VI.

IN HIS REGENERATING SPIRIT.

We could not find the beginning of the purpose of Redemption: with finite understandings, and sense-limited perceptions, we were forbidden to come up hither, and lose ourselves in the transactions of infinity and eternity. Opinions have been formed and widely controverted, respecting the pre-Adamic covenant; of the supralapsarian and sublapsarian schemes: whether man fell that he might be redeemed, or was redeemed because he fell: whether He who foresaw all, and had his remedy prepared, administered the antidote before or after the deadly poison had been swallowed: whether man was found before he was lost, and pardoned before he had transgressed, and saved before he was a sinner.

It is hard for the creatures of time, in the language of time, to discuss things that were before all time, and will be when time shall be no longer. God speaks of things that are not as if they were: of things purposed, as if accomplished,—ordained, as if done. The Apostle Peter speaks of Christ as a lamb without blemish and without spot, "who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world;"—and St. John, in the prophetic vision, heard of "names written in the book of life, of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

St. Paul speaks of the redeemed "as chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world," and of the Gospel as a mystery hidden from the beginning of the world, to be subsequently made known according to an eternal purpose; and elsewhere as the "hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory." We are safe with the words of God, and safe while we receive it simply as therein stated; viz. that the plan of redemption was ordained before the subjects of it existed: but remained a secret with Jehovah until the time appointed for its accomplishment, to be then progressively developed; a covenant purpose, first, in the counsels of the Eternal Trinity: a covenant promise, next, to all who, without understanding, should obey: and now a covenant fulfilled to all who understand and believe the manifestation of God in the death of Jesus Christ.

No similar obscurity waits us at the beginning of the work of redemption within the human heart; as to with whom or how the work originates. It is not with man: not in the returning love or repenting power of the creature. The first act of fallen nature was to run away from God; and further and further would he, and does he run, to hide the transgression and escape the shame. Adam made excuses for his sin, but asked no pardon; confessed his fear, but made no mention of repentance and contrition. The act of transgression he fully acknowledged, and the penalty he fully knew: but the sinfulness of sin and all its inseparable miseries, he did not know. He laid the fault on others—on his fellow-sinner, on Satan, on God his Maker, who gave him the woman, and set before him a forbidden thing, too desirable in appearance to be resisted. Disbelieving and disobeying the only law he had, he became incom-

petent to render the due of every creature to the Creator, and fulfil the universal condition of his favour. Adam had no longer anything to exercise his faith upon: and if he had not lost the rule of life, he had lost the power to obey it: perhaps the loss of knowledge, power, and will, were all comprised in the spiritual death he underwent, leaving him in outlawry till the Gospel was proclaimed. Before he could be restored to happiness in the favour of God, he must be put again in a condition to believe and to obey him; but the first movement towards reconciliation, the first step towards recovery could not be with himself: he did not ask it; perhaps he did not wish it. Man cannot, and will not, and never does begin the process of recovery in himself. It begins in the application as it began in the design: in the loving mercy of Jehovah—of the Father, "who for the great love wherewith he loved us, hath quickened us together with Christ:" of the Son, "who loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it:" of the Holy Ghost, "by whom we are sealed unto the day of redemption."

The natural man is not indeed in the same condition Adam was, between the act of transgression and the promise of the woman's seed: because we are all born under remedial rule—the legislation of recovery—the law of the Gospel. We are not outlaws—we are not done with—we are not without object of belief or rule of obedience. The extremes to which some persons carry the doctrine of particular redemption, would bring us almost to this position. If Christ did not in any sense die for others than the church elect: if the entire manhood was not affected by the prospective sacrifice of the Son of God, or in any manner interested in the dispensation of

grace, the unregenerate would seem to be without any known government or given rule of life; without object to believe, or commandment to obey. They would be judged indeed by their works; but their works must be judged by something: and we know of no rule irrespective of the Gospel. As there has been no covenant of works since Adam fell, if the fall is not in any manner retrieved by redemption to all mankind, it would seem as if God had had no dealing with them since. I think this is contrary to the whole tenor of revelation. Adam himself did not continue in this position. As soon as the covenant of works was ended by transgression, the covenant of grace was proclaimed: the possibility of reconciliation was disclosed, and Jehovah entered upon the government of man as a sinner, made capable of recovery. New objects of faith and rules of obedience were set forth, and time and opportunity accorded to the creature once more to believe and to obey his Maker. To this extent I suppose the whole world to have been ransomed by the precious blood of Christ—the whole created world: as well "the creature that was made subject to vanity, not willingly," as he who willingly subjected the same: as well the earth accursed, as he whose transgression cursed it. All was loved of Him who made it—all was pitied of Him who condemned it—all was paid for of Him who bought it: bought humanity itself, and all this nether world, to make another trial of it; not as before, in a state of innocence and bliss, but in a state of guilt and misery, under legislative sanctions adapted to its changed condition. If this new experiment, so to speak, seems, as to the many, to have failed, leaving to sorer condemnation them who have trodden under foot the Son of God, it is

no more impeachment of the love, and power, and wisdom, and foreknowledge of the Almighty than the first failure. It brings us only to the point at which we must hold our peace—the existence of evil in the presence of Omnipotent goodness, respecting which we have no opinion, and no answer, except in the words of inspiration, "Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" Faith has but one language upon points like these. "God is love:" love when he made the world, though death came upon all men: love when he redeemed it, though it be to the condemnation of many; a language borne out by knowledge and experience as far as they extend: in all things within our cognizance we have found, and proved, and known, that God is love. Can we doubt it in that wherein he works inscrutably?

But though we are not born, as I suppose, in the condition in which Adam was, or would have been without the purpose of redemption, we are born in the same nature: dead in the death he had already suffered, and dying the death to which he was foredoomed. Deep in our hearts, and clear in our understanding, be this first truth infixed,—the foundation and the key-stone of the gospel; if we confuse ourselves in this, we shall be confused throughout; if our faith be weak and indeterminate upon this point, it will be firm and stable upon nothing. "In the day that thou eatest, thou shalt die:" our parents ate and died, and we in them. "In Adam all died." It is no prospective unaccomplished thing. It did not wait even the Lord's voice in the garden. "I was afraid," "I was naked," "I hid myself,"—the natural born state of every man, which waits no judgment, and needs no execution. We are born dead in soul, and in body dying: it needs no further exercise

of deity to destroy either; it needs the whole covenant work of the blessed Trinity to bring either back to life; to raise every soul individually from the death of sin and misery in which it is conceived and brought forth, and the body from the grave to which it is hastening fast.

Whatever was the knowledge of good and evil Adam gained by the eating of the mysterious tree, the good has not been loved, nor the evil hated of any since begotten in his likeness; the children have not been dissatisfied with the forefather's choice, but day by day, and hour by hour repeat it, preferring the pleasures of sin to the fruits of holiness, and justifying themselves in that they are more suitable to our nature; good for food, pleasant to the eye, and much to be desired. And so they are to a corrupt and sensual nature, from which all spiritual affections have departed, and all holy tastes deceased. Cast pearls before swine? it is a strong figure, but it is in the book of truth, and it illustrates our meaning. What are pearls to them? They cannot eat them; they cannot wear them; they do not want them: give them husks, give them gross, worthless food that suits their appetites,—no wonder if they like it better. Man once, as he came out of his Maker's hand, had a better nature and might have made a better choice; but as he comes out of the loins of a corrupt progenitor, he has no nature to be pleased with high and holy things. Put the tree of knowledge and the tree of life again before him, and he will choose the wrong; set Ebal and Gerizim on his borders, and he will take the curse and lose the blessing. Place the present evil world, its pleasures, its profits, its wisdom on the one hand,—the gospel, with its spiritual and eternal blessings on the other: he takes the former

because he likes it best. Why like it best? Why make so strange a choice? Because it suits his natural disposition. We see that it is so; we feel that it is so; and thousands live and thousands die in full possession of their choice, deliberately made, pursued, persisted in. Many a heaven-sent message of remonstrance reaches them—"Thus saith the Lord:" but he gets no other answer than he got from Adam at the first. 'I am surrounded by things agreeable to my nature, I am invited by my companions to partake of them; I am told by Satan they are desirable and innoxious; it is his fault, their fault, thy fault, any-body's fault but mine,' "The likeness of the earthly," and, alas, how like! There was no remedy? there never would have been a remedy, if Jehovah had left his ruined creatures thus: there is no remedy now, but the scheme eternal wisdom has devised, and committed to the Holy Spirit's hand; to regenerate and recreate the soul, and change the nature, and renew the will, in such wise as to make the good desirable, and the evil abhorrent to us. "Ye must be born again."

Strange that this fundamental law of the Gospel, the most palpable, the most demonstrable, the most capable of proof and disproof; the most a matter of fact, if I may so speak, of all the doctrines of salvation, should be the one perpetually disturbed and disturbing, endangered and endangering the Christian faith. It is because this doctrine is the one our enemy most fears to let us be right in? Does Satan know that men may deny the doctrine of election, and yet make sure their own? May dispute against their own free will, and yet exercise it rightly? May be justified in Christ, without any settled assurance of it; be saved without

perfection, while contending for its necessity, and obey the law, while doubting its authority? Whereas, "Except ye be born again, ye cannot see the kingdom of heaven;" and until ye be born again, ye have not entered the kingdom of heaven: and unless ye both discern and enter into the kingdom here, whatever God in his purpose may know, you can neither give nor receive any proof that you will ever be admitted to his kingdom hereafter. If only we can be deceived upon this point, to seek regeneration where it is not; to take instead of it what is not it; to mistake the entrance-door, and knock and be admitted, and abide contented in some other place, the enemy of our souls cares little what we believe beside: for be we right or be we wrong, in our views of the method of salvation, and the path of life; so long as we enter not at the one end, we cannot reach the other; and the more nearly parallel our wrong path may run, the more secure he is to keep us from the discovery that we have not passed the wall of separation by the only opening grace has ever made in it. We have said, if we are wrong in this, we shall be wrong in everything; but it matters not as to our individual condition, though we be right in everything beside. The Gospel comprises many truths: mysterious truths; unsearchable and glorious truths; which demand credit without demonstration, faith without sight: but our personal interest in it is reducible to a matter of fact: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit: marvel not therefore that I said unto you, ye must be born again." This is that "earthly thing," which, if we believe not, all heavenly things are presented to our faith in vain; they can avail us nothing;

true doctrines though they be, they are not saving truth to us; and true riches though they be, they make us none the richer, so long as they are not ours. The sovereign mercy of God remains true; the substitution of the Son of man, the atoning blood, the justifying righteousness, the free and full salvation remain all true; but our own individual salvation rests simply upon this—"born again from above." Our Lord calls it an "earthly thing," because it is done wholly and entirely on earth: we have called it a matter of fact, because it is, or it is not. It is done, and then we are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God: we have received power to become the sons of God, we are no longer carnal but spiritual; in a state of grace, a state of acceptance; I believe, a state of absolute salvation. Or it is not done, and then we are what we were by nature,—flesh; earthly as is the earthy, and bearing the image of the fallen; a still corruptible and corrupted seed; heirs, as the true born are ever used to be, to that to which we were born to, the inheritance of our fathers; but no more:—"Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither can corruption inherit incorruption." "Ye are yet in your sins," subjects to condemnation, misery, and death. There is no other state but one of these; the division is absolute, as opposition and contrariety can make it. "To be carnally-minded is death—to be spiritually-minded is life and peace;" the parting wall is impervious, impregnable, and, except at one point impassible. "Ye must be born again." Some tell us, the parting-wall is also indiscernable; it would be sad indeed if it were so. There are eyes that cannot, and eyes that will not see it; eyes that Satan has mystified, and eyes that have mystified themselves,

till they cannot distinguish on which side of them the line of separation is, nor on which side are they of it; or whether they have passed the wicket through, or passed it by; but the fact remains the same,—and it remains a fact on which the salvation of every soul depends. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God."

Perhaps it is no wonder, seeing that this is so, and that the anxious aching heart cannot be satisfied with uncertainty; perhaps it is no wonder men have looked out for some external sign, more sensible if not more definite, more open to observation, if not to consciousness, being subjected to sense instead of faith, by which to separate the regenerate from the unregenerate, and fix the seal of adoption on the brow. So doing, it seems the natural and the nearest error, to seize upon the sign that God has appointed to exhibit and show forth the heavenly birth, and say that that is it; not the sign of something it resembles, not the seal of something done already, not the pledge or promise of something that may contingently be done hereafter, but the very thing itself. Let us only believe we are regenerated by baptism, by descent from godly parents, by adoption into some external community, or by any process of acceptance into the church on earth; it is easy to see how secure, how satisfied our minds may remain in our supposed condition. Alas! and how secure and satisfied our great enemy may be, so long as he can keep us thus at ease. But it is a wonder, a marvellous example of the difference between credulity and faith, that minds which cannot rest upon the plain promises of God exhibited in the sacraments, can rest in the sacraments themselves, without any promise at all; and that they who cannot find in their own experience of faith and repentance,

sufficient evidence of a change of heart, can believe the change in themselves and others in defiance of all evidence to the contrary. Yet is it not at this time true, that some who for years have been resting in faith, and bearing fruit worthy of repentance, are now betaking themselves to their baptism for a proof of regeneration, and insisting that their children were regenerate therein, in spite of the most manifest evidence that their hearts remain unchanged?

To the large number of professing Christians who think,—and with them may be ranked the ignorant and careless who think not at all,—that regeneration is only a change of position, and not a change of nature; giving to all mankind a capacity or rather an opportunity, without any new capacity, to procure their own salvation; and earn their own reward of gain or loss; to all these we willingly give up the controversy, as to when and how the new birth transpires: only maintaining that no such change is spoken of at all in Scripture under that name. The transaction does not answer to any description given in the Bible of the renewed life and character: for it implies in fact, no new life or character at all: the carnal being still carnal, and the seed of the corruptible being still corruptible: and although the work of Christ may be admitted in a small measure as having procured this change of position, all the essential doctrines of the Gospel are put aside, the work of the Spirit is made void, and the new birth not so much mistaken as denied. If this is intended, I cannot say why regeneration may not as well be baptism as any thing else. If fallen man requires no change of heart, but only remission for his forefather's sin, with the opportunity to repent and ex-

piate his own, to receive absolution from the hand of man, and recompense hereafter from the hand of God, according to his merits and his works; let it be so: let baptism be the first-born or the parent, it matters not; let it be the whitening, or the whitener of the sepulchre—we are not careful which: our holy and beautiful house is burnt up—the place where our fathers praised and prayed is gone; let them that take away the corner-stone, take the foundation-stone as well: all they could leave would be but ruin and confusion. It is not this we complain of: it is not this that tries our faith and breaks our hearts, and sends us mourning to our closets day by day, to ask if we, we only are to be left; or if they shall succeed to take away our life also. Our grief is to see the hands we do see put forth to help the ruin: pulling at the very ground-work of their own hope and confidence: removing the first stone the master-builder lays: as ignorant and thoughtless children at their play, will sometimes bring the loosened cliff upon their heads. It is child's play, it is idle to talk of baptismal regeneration, and assert it, and dispute for it; and end with showing that by regeneration we mean something else; or, it may be, nothing; but certainly do not mean that vital change of heart, and new birth of the Spirit, by which we become new creatures; and are passed from death unto life,—begotten anew in Christ: that vital, saving change, by which that which is carnal becomes spiritual, that which was earthy becomes heavenly; and that which died and was condemned in Adam, is made alive and justified in Christ. But are we to be children? Are we to prate idly, and ignorantly, and thoughtlessly about things in which our own and our fellow creatures'

everlasting welfare is concerned? If Christians mean, as I am persuaded many do, when they contend for baptismal regeneration, just no more than that the church that baptized the child has received it into its maternal bosom; has prayed for it, has blessed it, has devoted it to God, and promised to rear it in the knowledge of his ways; trusting his promises—not made to baptism, for there are none,—but to prayer, to devotion, to persevering labour and instruction;—let them say they mean this, and we shall agree with them—in all but in the word. Words are free; and if in secular things men choose, as whimsical disputants are often known to do, that a word shall not mean what it always has meant, but something that serves their purpose better; if they can get the world's consent, we cannot say why it may not. But does it become us, disciples of Jesus sitting lowly at his feet, to take his word that He has chosen to designate an event the most important, the most mysterious, the most blessed that can transpire on earth, or man experience, or angels witness, and say it shall mean something else? Methinks the master in Israel should have asked *how many* times a man could enter into his mother's womb and be born anew. Born first of the flesh, our children are flesh: born again, as is assumed, in baptism, what are they? Not spiritual: that the pious parent dares not say, while not one evidence of spiritual life appears; not a blossom, not a bud perhaps that gives promise of a heart transformed: we are sure no really pious person will venture to assume the gracious state of any one who bears no fruits, of faith, of repentance, of obedience or conformity to the will of God. But what then we repeat it, are they, these regenerate ones, who walk

not after the Spirit but after the flesh? Are they saved or not saved? Are they justified or not justified? Accepted or not accepted? Oh! you may not, you will not say these earthly ones are in a state of salvation now: you can only hope they will be. But then you know there is one entrance gate: they must become spiritual: must be born again from above: regenerate, according to your language, a second time; born a third time; before they can enter the kingdom of heaven. But suppose this never happens; and walking throughout according to the flesh, our baptized shall perish in the flesh at last. How came they so, after being once regenerate in the Spirit? Have they too undergone a second change, and since their baptism been born a third time into the flesh again: for of our Saviour's words we cannot rid ourselves: "Born of the Spirit is spirit"—"born of the flesh is flesh." I believe the serious Christian will answer, 'No: for it will then become manifest whether they ever were born of the Spirit unto life or not: baptism is invalid unless the conditions of it are fulfilled.' Yes: and we always supposed they meant this: they never really thought that every baptized one was alive in Jesus Christ—alive unto salvation—an heir of heaven whether he has repented and believed or not. For I speak not now to Papists or Tractarians, but to those who otherwise hold the truth as it is in Jesus; salvation by faith through sanctification of the Spirit: a full and free redemption. But why then tell us, and tell your children, what you really are not in your hearts persuaded of, that your baptized ones are,—what you at last admit that possibly they are not, and may not know till the end of life whether they are not? Is it not a dangerous

and a venturesome fiction to say that baptism is regeneration; when one is a fact, the other a contingency; when the one has been, the other may not have been, and moreover never may be? A child may have become regenerated at the time it was baptized: this nobody I suppose denies, although it cannot be certified, by even the earliest demonstation of piety; because it may be assumed to have been regenerate before. If it be asserted that it must be so because God has promised everything to believing prayer,—which is the argument of many; then why not say that prayer is regeneration? Did you never pray for the salvation of your child before it was baptized? Have you never prayed since? How do you know which of your prayers brought forth the blessing? 'Because at the ceremony of baptism I prayed in faith.' In faith of what? Of God's precious promises in Jesus Christ; of his willingness to save; of his acceptance of your heart's desire for your offspring that it might be saved? Then I am sure you did not tell your heavenly Father when, or how, or where it should be done; without a reservation of his will and wisdom; because his utmost promises never told it you. Or was it in faith of the efficacy of the ceremony: of saving grace inseparable from it; of promises especially connected with it? Then I think it was the most faithless prayer you ever offered, and likely to be the least acceptable to God; and the least blessed to you: because in the first respect, it was an idolatrous trust, ascribing efficacy to an outward form: in the next, it was a dishonest trust; for you do not really think the spiritual influence inseparable from the ceremony: and lastly, it was a presumptuous and a groundless trust, because it had no

promises to rest upon: there is not in the whole Bible a promise of efficacious grace or any other blessing to be dispensed especially in baptism. What faith then, what true scriptural faith, have we to exercise at that moment, that may not be in exercise at every other time? I have not spoken thus in reference to any particular views of evangelical truth. The attempt that has been made to reconcile the doctrine of baptismal regeneration with that of the final perseverance of the renewed, is to my mind so absolutely absurd, I scarcely can designate it by any name but nonsense; but though less weak and anomalous in connection with what we call the Arminian doctrine of the possibility of falling away from a justified and living state in Christ, to final perdition; I think it is not less at variance with those views generally: because while differing a little about the possible issue of the divine life, the Arminian and the Calvinist are agreed about the beginning; the necessity of a new-birth unto righteousness: and neither would admit that the soul is in a state of salvation, until it gives signs of a vital change of heart. Unregenerate nature can no more fall from grace than it can persevere in grace: therefore in either creed the same evidence of a regenerated state is required before the claim to be a child of God can be admitted: and is in fact assumed; in hope for an infant, in profession from an adult, before either is entitled to receive baptism. "Can any forbid water, that these should be baptized who have received the Holy Ghost?" Why was it not written,—that they may receive the Holy Ghost?

"The wind bloweth where it listeth:" regeneration may be at any time—any where—it must be sometime,

or the soul cannot be saved: I was going to say it may be in any way, or by any means. This I know not. I think perhaps there is but one way—but one agency. I can perceive no distinction between conversion and regeneration, except it be that one is the overt, the other the covert work: conversion being the external operation, as well as manifestation of the change; while regeneration is—I hardly know what to call it—so unseen, so untangible a thing it is—but say, it is that change itself. We can find a similitude very often when we cannot find a word: "Thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow." Or if we can trace the means by which these "day by day were fashioned, when as yet there were none of them," and how the frame once animated is sustained in life: yet who is present or who marks the time, where is the agency and what the means, when the soul is added to the moulded frame? May it not be the direct, exclusive act of Deity to give life, while instrumentality is used in every thing previous and subsequent thereto? I observe that Scripture speaks continually of agency in conversion: "He that converteth a sinner"—"Repent and be converted:" we know certainly that means are used, preaching and prayer, and reading of the word, and many other influences, to prepare the ground, and cast the seed abroad, and cultivate and nourish it when it shoots forth. But we do not find instrumentality connected with regeneration in inspired language; there is neither command to regenerate, nor exhortation to be born again. Paul claims to have begotten, in like manner as he had planted, and Apollos had watered: but they could no more mark the moment, the means, the occasion, when the soul took second life, that when

it took it first. I apprehend it may be as incorrect to talk of means of regeneration, as of means of salvation; Jehovah being the sole worker as well as author of them both: whereas means of grace, and means of conversion, are expressions strictly in conformity with Scripture language, to designate the instruments that God makes use of for the manifestation and outworking of his purpose.

"We cannot tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth:" how then are we to certify our longing, trembling souls, whether indeed we have been born anew, and become competent to enter into the heavenly kingdom? By the effects—by signs of life—by evidences of conversion. Is it because we cannot detect the inchoate being, that we do not know the living from the dead? Or if there be uncertain and questionable signs, does there want anything but time to make them certain? Regeneration may possibly have taken place, while yet there are no sure evidences of conversion; it must certainly have taken place whenever those sure evidences are to be found; but while the converted man may rest assured that he is born again from above, the unconverted man has no more right to suppose he is regenerate, than to suppose a human body lives, while neither respiration nor pulsation can be perceived.

Many Christians know the instrument used in their conversion, and when the new principle first gave token of existence in their souls. If these tokens have been sudden and decided, the outbursts of a vigorous and healthful life, it is likely to give a tone of confidence and assurance to our religion, which is often wanting where the developement has been more gradual, though not less effectual. Many of God's most eminent and honoured servants have, like Saul of Tarsus, thus awaked,

and found themselves new creatures; in full possession of a spiritual existence, which they neither sought, nor asked, nor desired, nor believed in, till they had it, and knew that they had it, and gave evidence to all who had understanding of the signs, that they were the new-begotten of the Lord. Other Christians have watched, anxiously and wearily have watched, or it may be through early years been watched by others, for the lingering, flickering, valuable tokens: too often mistrusted in the former case; since the intent desire is itself a most precious sign: too much presumed upon sometimes in the latter case, because childhood is so easily acted upon from without, to what seems a divine impulse from within. While some blest souls there are, sons and daughters of some Lois or Eunice, who remember no life but the life which they now live, by faith in the Son of God, under the fruitful influences of the indwelling Spirit;—it matters not how variable the developement, the means, the method, the manifestations of conversion; regeneration is the same in all; the power the same, the change the same, the necessity the same, the ultimate effects the same. "If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, all things are become new;" without which we cannot see, and much less enter into the kingdom: we may see something else that we mistake for it: we may enter into something that men call so; but we have not seen, and we cannot enter there, till this be done: we cannot do it for ourselves: men cannot, means cannot, churches, and ordinances, and formularies cannot do it for us. What must we do, how can we help ourselves? Ask, seek, watch, listen. This is no matter to remain in doubt upon. "Make your calling and

election sure." I know no ground of assurance but in the character of a regenerate nature; no proof of life, but the functions of life; no evidence of a new birth, but a new being; neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

The living child first feels and moves; then sees and hears; then desires; then knows; then thinks; then loves; then walks and talks; we do not know exactly which it may do first; we do not wait till it does all, before we say it lives. Faith and repentance, exhibited in conviction, hatred, and resolved abandonment of sin, with believing dependence upon Christ as the only atonement and satisfaction for it, are indispensable evidences of the new life: where these are not in any measure realized, I think we can have no evidence at all. All other fruits are perhaps to be taken rather as evidences of these, and can certainly prove nothing without them. Wherefore our church, directed by the word of God, requires of those who come to be baptized, only two things—repentance, whereby they forsake sin; and faith, whereby they believe the promises of God. We claim attention to this from all who betake themselves to the authority of our church in defence of baptismal regeneration: "What is required of them who come to be baptized?" mark into what confusion you thus bring the most sacred and vital truths: you make the church to demand the evidence of regeneration before she confers it; the fruits of the Spirit before she conveys it. "Dost thou believe?" "Dost thou repent?" This unregenerate nature never did, since Adam fell; and if it should, there would be no need of regeneration; nature would be sufficient to all that is necessary to salvation. Where such is the actual

persuasion, I have already said, the creed is consistent with itself, though not with the gospel of Jesus Christ. We have consented that men should finish their own work; assured that the crucified Redeemer will be no party to it; having begun their own salvation by faith and repentance, let them procure for themselves the regenerating Spirit, which they as little want, as they want the atoning blood and righteousness of Christ. Do they believe in either? "But ye have not so learned Christ;" and is it not apparant by the very questions put to those who come to be baptized, that the church requires evidence of previous regeneration, before she sets her seal to the holy compact of devotedness on the one hand, and acceptance on the other? That when she pronounces the baptized to be regenerate, it is on the presumption, that the profession may be true—that the neophyte has indeed been born again, and brings within him to the font the living principle, whereby, if time be given, it will forsake sin, and believe the promises of God; and if it be not, is made presently meet for the inheritance of the saints in light? Talk of the sponsors' faith and repentance being accepted for the infant! As a title to baptism so they may be; but as a title to regeneration in baptism, they must do for our children what they never did for us. Were our faith and repentance the cause, or the means, or the title to the reception of the Spirit in ourselves; or had we them not, till after He took up his abode within us? And now we proffer his own gracious fruits, in purchase of his life-giving influence on our children. Oh? it is fearful ground we trench upon in this confusion of the mind! Too near the dream of supererogatory merits; enough for ourselves and to spare for imputation, I have heard

a notion supported by analogy of human law; of qualification derivable from father to son. What does it mean? If it means a qualification for heaven without a change of heart, let them say so, and we shall understand them. If it means a qualification for the outward ceremony of baptism, we have no objection; but if it means that faith and repentance, the fruit of the father's regeneration, qualifies the child to be regenerated, it is a superfluity: the qualification derived from our first father was enough for that; every sinful soul, and every lost soul, and every dead soul, is but too well qualified by nature to be renewed and made alive and saved, if it shall please God in his unmerited mercy to shed the influence of his grace upon it. We come too close again upon a popish doctrine—the method of congruity. So hard, so very hard it is for man to give up all to God, and content himself to be nothing in the work of his own salvation.

The state of a regenerate soul is capable of proof to himself, in the witness of a good conscience before God; though not, perhaps, to the satisfying of an ignorant unbelieving world. St. Paul says "the works of the flesh are manifest:" the flesh, with his affections and lusts, being mainly occupied with earth, are more cognisable and open to earthly observation; while the fruits of the Spirit having so much to do with things unseen, and to the carnal mind unknown, are externally manifested, chiefly by renunciation of the former. The world esteems that this is all; and thinks with truth it is no great change to rely so much upon, except in the reformation of the grossly vicious. The renewed heart knows that this is least of all; and does not rely at all upon mere outward reformation: but on those changed

affections, changed desires, changed purposes, opinions, and pursuits, which make everything within us and around us new; by which the world seems as much changed to us, while just continuing what it was before, as we are really changed to it, albeit the world perceives no difference in us: "By whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world." The fruits of the Spirit are said to be "Love:" the carnal heart loves—but what? "Joy"—the carnal heart rejoices—but in what? "Peace"—the world seeks peace, and Satan promises it, but where? "Long-suffering, gentleness, goodness,"—all these fruits, lovely and goodly as they are, are gathered sometimes, and for a brief season, in the world's own garden; they may come of self-interest, natural temperament, or mere human influences, and they have their reward. They are things of time, and have a temporal value, and a temporal recompense. But, forasmuch as the first fruits are not rendered to God, from whom all these, as well as other good things come; and, forasmuch as they are not of faith, which can alone make them acceptable to God, they are as truly different in the regenerate heart, as the fruits that grow only there; and undergo as actual, though sometimes a less visible change: change of motive, object, application, and direction, from earthly to heavenly, from moral to spiritual. The remainder of our volume will be principally occupied with the developement of this vital change; the law of the Gospel in the heart and life of the redeemed on earth.

CHAPTER VII.

IN SAVING FAITH.

"THE just shall live by faith." I put faith first, because I think it is first in the operations of the Gospel within the soul of man; and I think also it is a primary law of universal being apart from the Gospel, and before it and beyond it. When life was by obedience of the law, it was not apart from the exercise of faith; whatever Adam saw in actual communication with Deity, there was something given him to believe which he saw not: and whatever the spirits of the just in heaven may know, there is that in Deity which less than Deity cannot comprehend, and therefore must receive in faith. Against faith the Evil One addressed his first temptation. It has been remarked, that all sin had its origin in a guilty thought; and so it had; but it was a thought of unbelief. Eve lusted before she disobeyed, but she disbelieved before she lusted. Unbelief was the eldest born of every sin and woe beneath the sun; the first stealthy indiscernible grain of seed the enemy dropped into Jehovah's field, while He rested from all his work that He had done: to use his own wonderful imagery in the Gospel, while he "slept." From that time forward it has been growing where it fell. "Whose seed is in itself upon the earth." It has brought forth after its

kind; it has multiplied its fruit a thousand-fold, till the world is rank with its offences. "From the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zacharias," it has covered the earth with slain; and when finally it slew the Lord of life and glory, it had not done its worst. "If any man speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him." Unbelief reviled, denied, denounced, and crucified the Son of God; and there was pardon still in his own precious blood-shedding for them that did it; but for them who through unbelief of the Spirit's testimony shall finally reject the Saviour, and deny the Gospel, doing despite to the spirit of grace, there is no forgiveness, either in this world or the world to come. Would I could fix the attention of every thoughtless reader on this fact; there is so much vagueness in our notion of being saved by faith, and lost for want of faith; as if it were a strange capricious thing to make eternal happiness and misery depend upon matters of opinion, ways of thinking—notions, persuasions, views, as they are called; vernacular expressions very suitable for subordinate matters, respecting which the Almighty has not distinctly revealed himself; but they have no more to do with saving faith than they have with the counsels of heaven. Views! opinions! "He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar: because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son." As unbelief brake the first seal of holy compact between God and man, and parted the creature from the Creator; so does it set the last seal upon the act of separation, to make it final and eternal: it was the first, it is the last, the damning sin; the alone unpardonable, irretrievable, inexpiable: "If ye

believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." Is it this of which we speak so lightly?

When faith was gone, obedience became impossible, and nothing but the fresh implantation of this principle can make obedience possible again. "Without faith it is impossible to please Him:" but rather, as our church expresses it, the very best works, being not done as God has willed them to be done, have the nature of sin: or, in the yet more forcible and decisive language of Scripture, "Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith." The first step toward the recovery of the fall, being on God's part to present by revelation new objects of belief, and call upon man to exercise faith upon them: is not faith naturally, we may almost say necessarily, the first emotion of the renewed life within the soul? Some have supposed repentance to precede it, but "they that come to God must believe that he is." Or, if we suppose prayer to be the first movement, "How can they call on him, on whom they have not believed." The whole history of redemption, the whole Bible story, seems to me but a developement of the effects of belief and unbelief: the one great object of faith, in some form or other, being ever present; whether in the seed of Abraham or the seed of the woman, the Paschal Lamb, or the firstlings of Abel's flock, the angel of the covenant, the expected Messiah, the Son of Man on earth, or the Son of God in heaven. The earliest trial of fallen humanity under the dispensation of recovery, to see if with a new revelation of the mind of God, with new objects of faith, and fresh inducements to obedience, they were any that would believe and do his will,

was made on Adam's first-born. "By faith" Abel offered the typical sacrifice, acceptable to God, because God had ordained it; while Cain chose his offering of that which he thought best, and probably valued most. It in no wise appears that Cain did not intend an acceptable offering to his Maker, for he was both grieved and disappointed at the rejection of it; but he exercised judgment instead of faith: he saw no reason why the fruit of his own toil was not as good a gift as a lamb from his brother's flock. Who does see a reason, except by the exercise of faith, why all propitiation is refused, save one: all useless to the justification of a sinner, except the blood of the slain Lamb of God? Cain meant, as thousands do, to propitiate his Maker; the very act of offering implies it. Why was He not pleased? Will a gracious God not accept our good intentions, our services, if we do the best we can? Our devotions, if we be sincere in what we profess? No: "To Cain and to his offering God had not respect." Wherefore? Cain was no murderer then? Because he sought it not by faith.

From that time forward, the word of God exhibits but two classes of mankind;—them that believe its testimony, and them that believe it not; with all the consequences, temporal and eternal, attending upon its acceptance or rejection. As faith divided the offspring of Adam when there were but two, it divided them again when all flesh perished upon the earth, and left but eight alive: for withal, that in Old Testament language, the separation was between the righteous and the unrighteous, it is declared in the New Testament to have been the righteousness that is by faith. Heb. xii. By faith, from the revolted, disbelieving world, a single one was separated, when God said to Abraham, "Get

thee out of thy country, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee." "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." And though that obdurate world was henceforth in a manner left, all further communication from on high being for a while withdrawn, it was not till their unbelief had been tested, by ample and abundant evidence of the Almighty power they rejected and despised. Witness the flood itself, so recent then; the dispersion of Babel, and the cutting short of the days of man upon the earth; acts of wisdom as well as retribution; aye, and of goodness too, to put a check upon the increase of iniquity, and try if they would believe in God's anger, and turn from their unrighteousness and live. They would not, and He left them. How? without a sign? without a token of remembrance and of pity? "Behold I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of covenant between me and the earth." "Seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night:" there was enough still for faith to lay hold of, and through the things seen, to enquire for things invisible. "Understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse."

"I will look upon it and remember, saith the Lord;" and so He did. To man, the bow has been in the cloud in vain: he has refused to believe its gracious attestation; but not in vain to God: He has looked and has remembered his covenant with all flesh. To the very nations abandoned to unbelief and disobedience through opportunities of repentance neglected and refused, the Lord has come again,—come in like mercy as at first, to invite their faith once more. "Opened the door of

faith to the Gentiles"—the very door their unbelief had closed, "that whosoever will may enter in." "I have set thee to be a light to the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth."

"How long will they be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have showed among them? saith the same long-suffering God to the leader of his separated people, whose whole history is but a detailed exhibition of the faith of a few, and the unbelief of the many; until "He sware in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest." We call this the legal dispensation; the administration of the Law; but the Law of Moses was pre-eminently addressed to faith, and only through faith wrought unto salvation. The blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin, except as faith saw in it some known or unknown purpose of God for the cleansing of the soul; saw afar off the promises they had not received; were persuaded of them, and embraced them. Every act of obedience to the typical and ceremonial dispensation, to be willing, heart-felt and sincere, must necessarily have been an act of faith; because the use, and purpose, and end of its requirements were for the most part so little cognizable to natural sense and reason. But what was the issue? "The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." They saw the rock whose gushing waters followed them, but knew not that "that rock was Christ:" they saw the healing serpent lifted up, but knew not the Son of man whom it represented; they read Moses and the prophets, but knew not the Messiah so plainly predicted in them. They tried, as others do, to obey without believing; they sought after righteousness, which they attained not, be-

cause they sought it not of faith; they sought it in the law, in the works of the law, whereby no man is justified in the sight of God. "If there had been a Law given which could have given life, then verily righteousness should have been by the law;" but there was not: neither then nor at any time since Adam fell, was there any covenant except the covenant of faith; any acceptable obedience, but the obedience of faith; neither will there be, till the day of grace is ended; for it is written, "The just shall live by faith, but the law is not of faith." The same spirit of unbelief that parted first the creature from the Creator, parted now the people from their God, the chosen people from their covenant God. "Broken off because of unbelief." And when in mercy He returns to Israel, as in mercy He has returned to the nations, his first rejected; the test will be the same, the terms the same. "They also, if they abide not in unbelief, shall be grafted in." Too easy terms, some think; but proved too hard for fallen humanity; too hard by far for them that say so; they lack even faith enough to believe that faith might help them, and therefore take no trouble to seek it for themselves, or ask it of the Lord. And oh! how difficult they have proved, these terms men think so easy, to Him whose more than six day's labour, whose almost six thousand years of recreative energy, has not yet prevailed to induce the mass of humanity to believe and live. But He desists not. Twice known, and twice refused, the world's Creator and Redeemer will return: and the twice victorious enemy shall be vanquished where he triumphed. Every eye shall see him: the Jew that crucified, and the Gentile that disowns, shall turn unto Him in one common faith; and still it will

be as it always has been, that "whosoever calleth on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Well might an apostle, overborne with the magnitude of his own theme,—the patience and long-suffering pity of the Lord,—exclaim in the fulness of his heart, "O the depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God: how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out."

In the midst of so much love, and so much loving toil, shall any perish? Yes—they will perish: numbers have perished, and are perishing daily, and will perish everlastingly: not because they were born in the similitude of Adam, neither because they are transgressors from the womb—but "because they have not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God." One separation more awaits the sons of men: it is the same it has been from the beginning: it is final, it is eternal: and this is it—"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Faith—saving faith—is "the substance," or as it is in the margin, "ground or confidence of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Faith is not hope: a large number of Christians appear to think it is; or do at least act and speak as if they thought so; since they go on hoping everything without effectually believing anything. They hope to be forgiven, and hope to be saved, and hope that they repent, and hope even sometimes that they believe, without any producible reason for such a hope; too often a mere shadow without a substance, grounded not on belief, but unbelief: because it wants the testimony on which faith is built: the testimony of the Spirit and the word. There is a reasonable expectation, founded on probability, on

calculation or experience, constantly in exercise under the name of hope; and properly applicable to divine as well as human things; resting upon God's attributes, his goodness, his mercy, his power; or on his general and contingent promises: but this does not, and cannot amount to faith, which rests solely upon God's *truth;* neither is it that hope of salvation to which faith alone can give substantiality. The justification of a sinner by the righteousness of Christ, never could have been a matter of reasonable expectation, of hope, or calculation, or probability, deduced from any knowledge that we have of God, unless it had been revealed and promised: it could not have been conjectured from his attributes, expected from his love, deduced from his wisdom, calculated upon from his mercy: it is therefore a matter of pure faith, resting simply upon his truth, and no otherwise a subject of hope than as it is by faith received: sole substance, ground, or confidence, of the things hoped for. Miserable shipwreck shall we make if we attempt to found our trust upon our hopes, instead of our hopes upon our trust. Yet what do we else, when we rest satisfied with hoping we shall be saved because God is merciful, because Christ died for all men, because we have partaken of his ordinances and called ourselves by his name, and done the best we can to justify ourselves before him, and commend ourselves to him? From the fantastic services of the capricious deities of mythologic story, to the toilsome dues of Popish superstition, and the restless servitude of modern pharisaism, many a bright baseless structure hope has built, and called it by the elder sister's name, while the hope itself was but a shifting sand. And a persevering master-builder she

has proved: for when the wind blows, and the rain descends, no matter how great the fall; she can build and build again—"The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones: the sycamores are cut down but we will change them into cedars"—and since none but the quite desperate can live without some sort of hope for the world to come, it is Satan's care we never lack materials for the work; so long as he can make another lie, we shall never want new names, and forms, and characters of religion: false refuges of hope under the name of faith. But whether they be oppositions to Christianity or perversions of it, not one, save the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ, has, or pretends to have, its whole, unmixed, unconditional security in the revealed mind and declared purpose of God; without which, and to the extent that it be wanting, whatever else it may be—and it is the grand distinction between all false religions and the true one,—it is "not of faith." "Which hope we have, as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast." Why sure? Why stedfast? Because that anchor is infixed in faith: not in probability, in calculation, or deduction, but in two immutable things: namely, that God has said it, and that it is impossible for God to lie. We may challenge every false religion, and every false profession and perversion of the truth, amid their endless mutabilities of lies, to produce the "substance" of the believer's hope: faith in the Word of God as a revelation of his purpose: faith in the character of God, for the fulfilment of his word.

Surely it is well written, "The just shall live by faith:" which, while it is the substance of all righteous hope, is the foundation also of all godly fear. "There is mercy with thee that thou mayest be feared,"

saith the Scripture: whence the fear of God is so commonly in Scripture made the test of faith: "Them that fear the Lord," is the most common appellation of the righteous; especially in the Old Testament, when "the things hoped for" were less distinctly visible to the eye of faith than they are now. There is as much of ill-grounded fear in religion as of ill-grounded hope: or if not ill-grounded, the fears of unbelief are so ill-directed, they only lead to surer mischief—"I knew thee, that thou art a hard man: and went and hid thy talent in the earth," is the mother-tongue of unbelieving fear throughout the world; coming of misconception and leading to indifference, disobedience or despondency. The natural heart may sometimes grow fearless, as it grows hopeless, upon unbelief: I should think not often; and certainly not long; as the restlessness of error proves: but wherever perfect love has cast out fear, it is by believing, not by disbelieving, the wrath of God revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of man, and thence taking refuge from it in the cross.

"The evidence of things not seen." In courts of justice, evidence is proof: capable indeed of more or less completeness according to its strength; we speak of matters suspected, supposed, believed: but if the evidence be sufficient, we call the matter proved. Such evidence is faith within the heart of the believer—"He that believeth hath the witness in himself"—progressing from the first conviction, taken upon God's word, that these things are so, to the experience, the enjoyment, the full possession of them: and as in the former sense faith is sometimes called hope in Scripture—"The full assurance of hope," &c.: so in this other

sense, it is sometimes called knowledge—"We *know* we have eternal life"—"Believe the works, that ye may *know* the Father is in me, and I in Him;" in earthly judgments we should call it proof. The vision of faith is not all futurity—sure and most blessed as that futurity is. There is the invisible present: the undemonstrably sure: the impalpably certain,—faith's inward evidence of things not seen, things actual, things realized, possessed, enjoyed: which "the natural men cannot receive, neither can he know them: because they are spiritually discerned."

We sometimes speak of the evidence of the senses, as if it were the strongest that can be attained: but it is so only because man has become a sensual creature, deprived of all spiritual perceptions. He who feels nothing and loves nothing but through the medium of his senses, may well grow incapable of any other evidence. Thomas spake the language of every unbelieving heart when he said, "Except I see the prints of the nails in his hands and feet, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." Yet the senses are but the machinery of time: limited and imperfect, and easily deceived, even in the exercise of their own proper uses: unfit, altogether, to be trusted with the proof of things spiritual and eternal. Whose eyes, whose ears, whose keenest perceptions have not at times deceived them? It is a part, a most important part of the Holy Spirit's work, to make the regenerate nature capable of a stronger and surer evidence. "Blessed is he that hath not seen, and yet hath believed." Revelation first deals with man as a wholly sensual creature, deprived of spiritual perception and inaccessible to spiritual things: in whom it is necessary to beget a new power,

competent to hold converse with the things unseen; and this new power is faith. For this end he is first addressed through his senses: "Faith cometh by hearing;" and for a long season we find the testimony of the senses was made use of to confirm as well as to explain the word. Outward and visible signs, types and shadows, and symbolic representations formed the first lessons of the new-born church: and miraculous interferences with the course of nature gave testimony to the first utterance of the truth, to beget in man the faith that supercedes them. Their small success with mankind at large is ample proof of the inferiority and insufficiency of these external evidences, awful and astounding as they sometimes were. Ninevah repented at the preaching of Jonah, because they believed, although they saw no supernatural sign: a greater than Jonah appealed to the evidence of sense in vain, when he said—"If ye believe not me, believe me for the works' sake." So far from thinking that the church in its senility wants faith to produce miracles, I believe she never wanted miracles but to produce faith: that stronger evidence of things unseen which needs not the more dubious evidence of sense. Would any true Christian's belief in the presence and agency of devils, for instance, be strengthened by the seeing or the hearing of them? Miracles do not address themselves to faith: they presuppose its absence: they are the curious instruments by which the diseased and blinded eye may be restored to sight; not that with which it sees. When heretofore this curious instrument was trusted to a few, (for it was never given to many,) for conviction of the heathen, and not for edification of the church, with power by a special exercise of faith to

use it, it was to prepare the heart through faith in the word preached, for the stronger evidence of the indwelling Spirit. Stronger it should be than anything mere mortal sense can testify: and so it is, when saving faith is once begotten in the soul. To the spiritual Christian, in proportion as he is spiritual, in proportion I believe to the strength and not to the weakness of his faith, the affected resumption of miraculous powers in the church is peculiarly painful: not only because he believes them to have been withdrawn when they had served their purpose of completing and verifying the written word; but because he feels them so ill-suited an ailment for the divine life within his soul; so dark, so low, as compared with the evidence of faith within. It seems once more to substitute sensible for spiritual things, and place a veil of matter between spirit and spirit: the opaqueness of things seen, between himself and the unseen realities with which he holds converse day by day; on which he lives and grows, "from faith to faith," till faith itself seems lost in its own reality, and calls itself sight again. It was faith's lofty vision Job had reached, when he said, "I have heard of thee with the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee." It was faith's exclusive vision Jesus meant, when he said—"A little while, and the world seeth me no more: but ye see me."

We cannot tell the unbelieving world what passes in the lonely chambers of the contrite, in the lonely bosom of the broken-hearted, when Jesus kneels beside the penitent at his prayers, grasps the cold hand of agonized remorse, and gathers the scalding tears into his bottle. We cannot make known the blest companionship of day-time walks, or the sweet commun-

ings of night-time meditation, when buried griefs and incommunicable joys out-poured to the Unseen, find sympathy that waits not for either voice or vision. Can the wife show the fellowship of her widowed home, or the mother, when the last she had is gone?

A prophet could relate what passed in a king's palace; when his sleep went from him, neither were instruments of music brought before him; but has he told—has Daniel told the converse of the mysterious den where the voracious beast stayed his appetite to listen; or of the charmed furnace where the terrified Babylonian saw "Four men loose?"

Can any tell what passes between the soul and the Unseen, when the holy book is in the hand, when the sacred emblems are between the lips, when heaven's gate is opening in the distance, and the messengers of mortality are at the door? These are faith's secrets; not lawful, because not possible to be uttered, without calling them what they are not, things of sense, and submitting them, as we may not, to the misapprehension of unbelief. The soul that so enjoys by faith the evidence, the proof, the reality of things unseen, has a sensitive dread of whatever tends to lower it into sensible signs and outward manifestions; whether they be sacramental elements or supernatual gifts. To this feeling, perhaps, we may attribute the extreme aversion the most spiritually-minded persons feel, from misapprehension as I think, to the doctrine of the personal reign of Christ upon earth; as if it were to exchange the intercourse of spirit with spirit in the unseen world, for the renewed intercourse of flesh and blood. They feel, and justly feel that Christ's bodily presence was less effectual to his disciples than the Spirit received

from him after his departure, as a medium of union and communion with himself. "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come." Not till faith was substituted for sight, the intercourse of spirit for the intercourse of sense, were the apostles themselves, "able to comprehend the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge;" passeth all knowledge of which the heart of man was capable, even by personal intercourse with Him, until Christ was formed in them, "dwelt in their hearts by faith." Far other than the intercourse of sense, as they had sometimes known the Son of Man, but knew him now no more, was the expectation of Paul, when by the earnest of the Spirit given him, he longed for re-union with the Son of God; and very different, as I understand it, is the anticipation of those "who love his appearing," and dwell joyfully upon the expectation of his coming; when "with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we shall be changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord:"—not by descending from a life of faith, to a life of sense again; from things spiritual and heavenly, to things temporal and earthly; from high and holy communing, to external signs and wonders; but by the attainment of something above faith and beyond it, called in the Holy Scriptures knowledge—"Then shall I know even as I am known:" some limited communication perhaps of that power by which Deity knows, without the intervention of either sight or faith: a modified emanation perhaps of that faculty which once dwelt in humanity without measure, "and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man."

CHAPTER VIII.

IN THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH.

FAITH and obedience are Jehovah's eternally-united law: we have supposed them to be the law of universal being. To separate them is the device of man: the lie, the favorite lie of him who is the father of lies. Some of us he persuades to try faith without obedience: "Holding the truth in unrighteousness:" but I apprehend this is oftener profession than belief. St. James does not say, "If a man have faith and hath not works," but "If a man say he have faith and hath not works."

There have been professed Antinomians, and practical Antinomians, but I have always doubted if there have been believing Antinomians; that is, if any one believing the truth as it is in Jesus, and deriving his views of it from the Bible only, has really held himself free of its commandments. If indeed a man has revelations of his own, or traditions of his fathers, or doctrines of men, whether they be old wives' fables, or questions of science falsely so called, on which he builds his faith, instead of, or together with, the written word: since he supersedes the Gospel, I cannot say but he may also supersede the law: and yielding but a partial faith to the word of God, it is likely he will yield it but a partial obedience also.

This, by observation, we shall find to be the fact. We shall rarely find an individual, or a party, having another rule of faith beside the doctrines of the Bible, but they have another rule of life beside the precepts of the Bible: and contrariwise, in pretty near proportion one to the other: whether by adding to or taking from the words of the sacred book, exacting more or less than God has ordained to be believed and done. I do not apply this to the weak believer; the tried, the tempted, the even overcome; who do not the things they would, and hate things they do: for these consent to the law that it is good, and their very conflict with sin is an evidence of faith. The warrior who is borne wounded from the field, does not forfeit his share in the rewards of victory; and the faithful soldier of Jesus Christ may be as true when he is beaten, as when he is victorious, if he be found manfully fighting against the world, the flesh, and the devil. But I mean to say that persons allowedly departing from the practices of the Gospel, will, on close scrutiny, be generally found to have departed also in some manner from its doctrines; making it doubtful whether any man has ever really believed without obeying the truth,—has had faith without works. The more frequent method of contravening the Almighty purpose, is to attempt obedience without faith. Hundreds and thousands have tried it, and tried it honestly, and failed contritely. "I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." A hard and bitter service it has often been, a service of fear, without either faith or love, and always unsuccessful. "Say, ye that desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law?" Yes, they hear it, with all the thunders of Sinai in its voice: but Satan

has much to say to an uneasy, as well as to a too easy conscience; he has encouragements as well as hindrances to give; and gives never the latter on such a course as this, wherein a successful issue is not to be feared; while too speedy failure might warn the bankrupt debtor of approaching ruin. Our evil counsellor prefers to send the troubled conscience back, to try and try again, till life is spent, and the worn spirit lies down deceived or desperate; he has given it that to do, which never has been done since Adam fell, perhaps never since there were beings in God's universe to believe Him and obey;—he has set us to do the one without the other.

But the word wherein it is written, "By faith ye are saved," "The just shall stand by faith," saith also, "We walk by faith;" an acting, moving, and impelling principle, that while it supplies momentum, determines the line of motion. "Faith that worketh by love," and teacheth love how to work; puts us first in a condition to please God, and then directs us how He may be pleased. This righteous walk is called in Scripture the "Obedience of faith," being much more than simple obedience to a given rule of conduct, however comprehending it, and differing widely from the obedience which is of the law as a moral code; faith being often called upon to act without law, and to become to the believer what conscience is to the natural man, "a law unto itself."

St. James gives the name of works to these out-actings of a saving faith; for that it was of the obedience of faith St. James was speaking, and not of the works of the law, whereby can no flesh be justified, is manifest from the examples he produces.

Abraham obeyed no moral law when he offered his son Isaac upon the altar; nor Rahab the harlot, when

she betrayed her people. Both had received communications from on high; the one from God, the other from God's messengers: they believed and acted upon faith against law: faith wrought by their works, and was made perfect in the performance of them: as the mental power of genius works by its own hand, and is perfected in so doing. By a similar application of language to that we remarked upon before, wherein faith was said to justify, because it makes application of the righteousness of Christ, in which alone is justification, —good works are here said to justify, because they are the outworking evidence of the indwelling principle, which if it acts not when called upon, is unproved and imperfect at the best, and dormant if it be not dead. "Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show my faith by my works." Abraham might have done many works, and not have shown his faith; he might have obeyed the laws of humanity and justice, and given all his goods to feed the poor, without faith as well as without charity; but when he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten Son, of whom it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called, —contravening, as it appeared, both law and promise, at the bidding of the Almighty; a work indeed it was, but a good work only as faith wrought by it; an act of obedience it was, but it was the obedience of a faith so pure, so simple, so entire, that every law of morality, humanity, and paternity was forgotten in it.

Faith sets the lawgiver above the law. Unbelief affects to do just contrariwise; affects to set the law itself in opposition to Him that made it; not submitting to the righteousness of God which is of faith, but going about to establish a righteousness at variance with it,

under the name of "works." We must dwell a little upon this truth, for many an irksome chain the enemy has forged under this goodly name, to make weary the paths of life, or disguise the ways of death, from the self-imposed torments and restrictions of the Romish devotee, to the restless peculiarities of the unstable Protestant; from the pride of self-sacrifice or triumph of self-gratulation, to the jealously of self-love, or despondency of self-reproach; as far every one of them, from the walk of faith, as they are from the paths of peace. "For he that is entered into that rest, has ceased from his own works, as God did from his," and *our own works* they are, whether they be bad or good, lawful or unlawful, if we have no warrant for them in the word of God; because "whatever is not of faith is sin; sinless though it be to all intents beside. "By works a man is justified." What works? When he fasts twice a week, and gives tithes of all that he possesses, and walks proudly in the uprightness of his heart? When he lives usefully and harmlessly among his kindred and his people, does justice and loves mercy, and says, "What lack I yet?" When he offers as his own the gifts he has received, his good dispositions, his church privileges, his ordinances and devotions, to buy acceptance for himself, and make atonement for his sins; or contrariwise, makes a merit to despise the good gifts of God, by a show of wisdom, will-worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body? It is written, "The sacrifices of God are a broken and a contrite spirit." It is written, "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircumsion, but a new creature." It is written, "If any man will come after me, let him take up his cross and follow me."

Unbelief answers, Nay, but the better part of devotion is order, propriety, and conformity; the better part of Christianity is virtue, benevolence, usefulness, and self-restraint: more acceptable to God than Creeds and doctrines,—"I will show my faith by my works." But where, we ask, would Abraham's faith have been, or his works either, if he had argued thus,—'I love my child, I love my country and my Father's house, I serve God and my generation where I am. Should I lay murderous hands upon my child? Should I go out I know not whither? Impossible that God should require things so unnatural and unreasonable.' Similar in kind to the justifying works of Abraham, were the works of Noah, when he laboured at the Ark: and of Moses, when he exchanged the Egyptian palace for Jethro's sheep-fold: and all theirs, of whom the world was not worthy, when they were driven from the common walks of life, to wander in deserts, in mountains, and in caves of the earth. Had these not wrought righteousness, they had not obtained a good report by faith: but their obedience was directed neither by natural duty, nor moral fitness, nor legal institutions, but by the word of God, inscrutable and veiled in mystery as it was: in unreceived promises and far-off hopes, embraced, confessed, and lived upon by strangers and pilgrims upon the earth.

We have received the promises, we have seen them near, written in the word of life, and pressed home by the Spirit on the heart: "Made manifest by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." The Gospel has changed the way-marks, but the eye that reads and follows is the

same: faith hears no more the special and mysterious word that bade the Father slay his gracious child; the patriarch to disinherit his eldest born; the conqueror to show no mercy to the vanquished; the feminine hand to use the workman's hammer; but faith still reads a fixed immutable word, as much against nature when the occasion comes, "Love not the world, neither the things of the world:" "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple:" Aye, and hate things beside more dear to some of us than any one of these; for men have sacrificed them all to their own heart's pride and self-justifying righteousness, who would not have given up those for the love of Jesus. "Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God; and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." By this rule of obedience our works will finally be tried, and by it be justified or condemned according to that which we have done, whether it be good or evil. It is our rule of life; it comprehends, as a portion of itself, the moral law, but is not it? A very little way upon the heavenward course will the believer travel, before he finds himself involved in difficulties through which he must find his way by faith without a rule; or with a rule so generalized, that faith must give the digest of the law to each particular conscience. Would we know what is the first and great commandment of this new code, we have the answer once given to them that asked, "What shall we do that we might work the work of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye be-

lieve on him whom he hath sent." And if this be the Gospel's first and great commandment, the second is like unto it. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." On these two, as heretofore upon some other two, hang all the law and the prophets: all Gospel teaching, and all Christian practice. We might as well try to keep the law of the two tables without love to God, as the law of the Gospel without faith in Christ: having neither principle to work with nor rule to work by. Men have tried both—are trying still; to keep the commandments of the second table without regard to the first; to keep the precepts of the Gospel without belief in Christ; under the name of morality, to fulfil their relative duties irrespective of the claims of Deity: under the name of Christianity, to fulfil their religious duties irrespective of the doctrines of the Cross. It has never been done—it never can be done: it would be of no value if it could. "The life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." Believe all that the Son of God has done, and all that he has said; believe his word, its mysteries, promises, precepts, and prohibitions; believe the strivings of his Spirit within you, the example of his humanity exhibited before you; believe his works in all the analogies of providence and grace; not one of these testimonies will be found at variance with the other; and in the mouth of so many witnesses may every doubt be solved, and every rule established. Do we walk by faith, that we may walk uncertainly; that we may never know distinctly what we ought to do: that we may harass ourselves with endless doubts and fears, and harass each other with perpetually-conflicting judgments about things lawful and unlawful, permitted and for-

bidden? No. "Great peace have they who love thy law." It does not come of faith, nor yet of truth; that strife of tongues, and strife of conscience, hard judging, and hardly judged, wherein the distressed spirit is more likely to give up every thing as wrong, than to hold fast that which is right. These are most commonly the results of deficient faith; of the want of simplicity in our dependence or intention; a half-confidence that will not trust God, or a half-heartedness that cannot trust itself. "Make straight paths for your feet." It is the part of faith working by love,—by love which makes sure the good intention, while faith makes sure the acceptance of it—to put an end to this uneasy and unquiet service, and enable the children of God to walk in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free; not by making void the law, but by throwing so much light upon it, and adding so much breadth and depth thereto, that it becomes indeed a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our paths; becomes what it was ever fitted and designed to be, the joy of our hearts, and the solace of our lives. "Thy law is my delight." It was faith, not nature, which wrought in David, when he said, "Lord, how I love thy law." Men cannot love doubtfulness, apprehension, and uncertainty; a timid looking-for of judgment upon undefined transgression. God showed his merciful consideration of this under the legal dispensation, wherein there was so much of ceremonial and constructive, as well as moral right and wrong, in the exactness with which everything was prescribed for sacrifice, for purification, atonement, redemption, and whatever other service; an onerous exactness in itself, but less painful than continued apprehension and misgiving. Under the Gospel, faith is the blessed sub-

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"I write unto you, little children, that ye sin not." Let John give the text, and let Paul supply the comment. "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that which he alloweth." The 14th chapter to the Romans, developes the broad principle of the obedience of faith: its particular out-actings are developed in the whole Bible. Observe how broad and yet how close that principle is; nothing but dishonesty or self-deception can evade it. "Let every man be persuaded:" not by custom, not by example, not by habit, prejudice and feeling, but "in his own mind;" in the secrecy of his heart before God: if he be not, let him forbear the practice, forego the purpose, put away the desire, suspend the compliance, until by prayer and study of the word, he can satisfy himself about it. "For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our hearts; he knoweth all things;" and knoweth perhaps that some innocent act is stained with conscious guilt; because we suspect while we do it, that it may be contrary to the mind of God; or we intend to do it, whether it is or not; or we yield to our inclination in it, without consulting Him; or because we are disposed to it by some extraneous and forbidden motive; expecting from it some unhallowed pleasure or unrighteous gain. Perhaps God knows, and perhaps he knows that we know, that this thing so innocent, so lawful, so reputable, will chill our prayers, and stay our growth in grace, and leave us

to sterility and heartlessness. There is a large portion of things innocent, on which no moral law can be directly brought to bear, that are thus prohibited by the law of faith, at least to him who "eateth with offence." But "hast thou faith: have it to thyself before God," let no one and let nothing interfere, or be taken into the account between Him and you, to disturb your conscience or divert your purpose: be content that God knows, and that you know, the faithful intent and motive of your heart, simply and honestly to do his will. But be not diverted or distressed; above all, be not angry, that other men think otherwise, condemn you, perhaps, for the very practice or enjoyment for which you are giving grateful and confiding thanks. The faith that enables the soul to walk at liberty before God, should not want the make-weight of human approbation: and what it does not want, it should not fret itself to be denied. Surely the irritability we feel about things in which Christians differ and must differ, wanting such an exact and perfect standard as might be applicable to all persons and all circumstances alike, is unreasonable on all sides, and gives token of a weak and vacillating faith. What do we but endeavour to weaken other men's faith, whereby alone they can have confidence before God, and wherein alone their works can be accepted of him, when we would compel them to walk by our belief instead of by their own; conforming themselves to a standard wherein faith at least can have no exercise, because it is received of men and not of God? And what do we but betray the insufficiency of our own faith, when we cannot stand contentedly upon it, though not a single soul stand with us: when we cannot hear without resentment, or bear without impatience,

the differences of opinion, or differences of practice, by which we find our own to be questioned or condemned?

We are sometimes willing, I believe, to tolerate minor differences as errors; wherein we take first the privilege to judge and to decide: while we are not willing to leave others the same privilege, and accept only toleration in return. Many a bitter broil has been awakened in the churches, and many a hard term of heresy and schism been exchanged,—aye, and many a persecuting sword unsheathed, upon no better ground than this: that men do with the freedom of faith, as they like to do with political liberty, take so much space for the exercise of their own, as would preclude its exercise by any one beside. It may be questioned, I think, whether a part at least of all our soul-distracting, love-destroying disputations about things indifferent to salvation, has its origin in the settledness of our faith and fervour of our jealousy for the truth of God, or in the unsettled and unsettling tenaciousness and jealousy of our self-love. Is the Dissenter really so captious and impatient, because the Establishment is in the wrong, or because its discipline excludes *himself?* Is the high churchman so scornful and contemptuous, because his dissenting brother is in the wrong, or because he differs and separates from *himself?* When the rigid scrupulous, sensitive, believer, so sternly judges the grateful enjoyment of providential gifts by others, and the sanguine, liberal, free-hearted believer throws ridicule upon the self-denying abstinence of the first, is the sole feeling in both hearts no other, than grief for the despising or misusing of a heavenly Father's bounty and indulgence? Or is it rather true that the charity, the brotherly love which can just stretch itself to tolerate another's mis-

takes, cannot endure to be believed mistaken? This should not be: and it would not be, if our faith were simple: if we were content with having it to ourselves before God, without requiring to be confirmed in it by human approbation: if we had no misgivings of heart about our own persuasion. This is indeed our greatest difficulty: but faith should be sufficient to it. He who judged no man and was judged of none, says also, "I judge not mine own self." When a believer has, in honesty and simplicity, and careful study of the Scriptures, with soberness, vigilance, and prayer, sought to conform himself to the mind of God, in all disputable matters; he should walk freely, walk at large, in the persuasion he has come to, even though it is not impossible he may be wrong. "God is able to make him stand." It is not faith that returns for ever upon itself, with a sort of doubtful disputation against itself, which it is impossible to satisfy: for could even its previous actings be recalled, it would equally return to question the reverse. 'Perhaps I am always wrong: perhaps I always have been wrong in every persuasion I have ever come to:' there is many a deep-thinking, deep-feeling, sin-humbled and sin-wearied Christian, well enough disposed to come to this conclusion; and scarcely to be surprised if any one should tell him so: but in the singleness of a believing heart, I may have confidence before my Father still: the calm, submissive, lowly confidence, of a faith without which love would be too timid, and obedience too anxious: the very confidence a loved and loving child has, who looks to a father's eye for guidance, when he knows not what path to take; catches the slightest signal, pauses and turns, and looks and looks again, to be confirmed if he is going right, and recalled if he is wrong.

Add to our former text the Apostle's words subjoined to it: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins"—and we perfect the picture of the walk of faith: and open the secret of that peace and joy which tend upon righteousness in the Holy Ghost. When the believer has endeavoured to avoid all sin, and fulfil all righteousness, in believing conformity to the revealed mind of God; if he sin, as he will sin, by infirmity, by ignorance and misbelief, there is for him, in like manner as there was in the typical dispensation, a sacrifice appointed for guilt unknown: for sins unknowingly committed, as well as for sins repented and confessed. Faith offers this holocaust from day to day; "Cleanse thou me from my secret faults." "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me." It is the language of a belief mistrustful of itself, but confident in him on whom it trusts. Who else dares use it, or can use it? Not he who loves his sins, would rather keep as many as might escape detection, and plead ignorance and mistake for their indulgence. Not he who expects his Maker to enter into an arrangement with him, and accept from him an equivalent of penance or good works. All these are interested to disguise the sum of the too heavy creditorship: would rather blot the book and give the cruel reckoning to the winds, than invite the eternal eye to search it, and try it thoroughly. Love and fear must first change places: and they who once loved the sin and feared the law, must learn to fear the sin, and love, intensely love the law that is against it—"Better to me than thousands of gold and silver; sweeter than honey and the honey-comb." Who can

say it, but he whose iniquities are pardoned, whose sin is covered? As in the former chapter we remarked the broad difference between a covenant of works and the covenant of grace; in that the one demanded perfection, while the other waited but for the first living germ; there is a no less remarkable distinction between the obedience that is of faith, and that which is of the law. The law requires both more and less than faith: and therefore more than a child of man can offer, but less than a heavenly Father can accept. The law has no demand within or beyond its letter: it knows nothing of ignorance, incapability, or misconstruction: it demands fulfilment, exact, perfect, entire, but no more: it does not enquire for motives: it does not ask for consent; still less for choice, and least of all, delight: it never takes the will without the deed: it would take, if it could have it, the deed without the will. In benignant, yet exalted contrast, Gospel obedience takes the will, the preference, the delight, for all, and could not take all without it: and so doing becomes at once possible to the most sinful, and worthy of the Most High. It provides for infirmity, ignorance, misconception:—even for failure, short-coming, and misbelief; if it did not, no son of man could walk its paths in peace, or enter into rest till he entered into heaven. But it makes account of nothing without a willing mind, without a loving heart, without an honest purpose and a consenting will: if it did, could it be worthy, or suitable, or acceptable to Him, whose language is, "My son, give me thine heart,"—"Henceforth, I call you not servants but friends,"—"My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

CHAPTER IX.

IN REPENTANCE UNTO LIFE.

HOPE—the groundless, careless, desireless expectation of good in a future world, we have said is not saving faith: and fear, the natural heart's dread of death and judgment, though it consign us to a life of bondage, is not repentance unto life eternal. Man is by nature accessible to fear: to that fear which has torment, and has torment only; the fear that weakness has of power; that guilt has of discovery; that wrong doing has of retribution. Thousands who have desired no futurity have feared one; and men who believed no life beyond the grave, have trembled on its brink: and, though there may be a time when the transgression of the wicked saith there is no fear of God before his eyes, and the power that can bind the ocean with his sand, can set no barrier to the overflowing of iniquity, I apprehend it needs the indurating process of habitual earthliness and encouraged godlessness, to render the heart callous to all sense of danger from offended Deity. The fool that says in his heart 'No God; let there be none—let us have none,' speaks oftener his wishes than his conviction; and it may be doubted, I think, whether the most hardened infidel, whatever he professes, has ever quite relieved himself of the apprehension that

there may, by possibility, be a God and an hereafter. In a christian country where the divine authority of the Bible is generally admitted, thousands believe enough for fear, but not enough for hope; and he who does likewise, knows well how to turn the fearful conviction to account, by bidding the trembler do what his first father did,—go hide himself. Yes, there is many a fallen son of that first fallen, born of his father's nakedness, who comes even in this life to partake of his father's shame, but finds no better covering than the sewn fig-leaves;—"covers with a covering, but not of my Spirit, that they may add sin to sin:" the sin of a stifled conscience—of a resisted spirit—of a convicted but still impenitent heart. Such was the conviction of Esau, when he found no place of repentance, though he sought it with tears: of Judas, when he cast to the potter the goodly price the shepherd of Israel was priced at: such is the conviction falsely called penitence, which leads men to do many things, painful and costly things, to expiate sins they have no intention to forsake, and appease a law they would rather pay the forfeit of than keep. "Thousands of rams and ten thousands of rivers of oil—my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul:" take all, take anything, except the sin itself.

The natural heart does often hear the voice of God saying to it, what is said at first, "Adam, where art thou?" From the age at which the mind becomes capable of reflecting upon itself, till the day of grace is closed, there is no moment at which this voice might not be heard, if we would listen; there are moments when we must hear it, whether we will or not; and whether heard from within or from without, in the

stirrings of natural conscience, the remonstrances of the word, or the strivings of the Spirit, it is alike the voice of God. How frequently has it spoken to every one of us: in the rejoicing time of our prosperity; in the considering time of our adversity. Is there a heart so hard, that no *magnificat* was ever wrung from it for benefits enjoyed? So stubborn, that no *non nobis domine* of grateful dependence was ever forced to breathe in it? I do not think so. Our ears are often wounded by the careless 'Thank God' of the thoughtless and profane: but it is the utterance of truth in hearts untrue, not always stifled when disowned. And if in vain amid the revelry of successful life, the voice of Deity cries after us, "Where art thou?" too happy and too busy to regard the importunate muster-roll; there are times when the most reckless natures are compelled to hear—when the midnight tocsin sounds, and the stoutest spirit echoes back, "Where am I?" In danger—in misery—in death! Is there, can there be one that never said, "Lord, have mercy on me!" I should think not.

Speaks not the Almighty to all of us in his Word, and by his Spirit? I know there are some people, pious people, who do not think so: who suppose the Bible has no message for the reprobate, and would have God's ministers deliver none. They deny that mankind at large have any call or opportunity to answer—any interest in the blood of Christ, or benefit of the covenant of grace; and therefore, conclude they have no conflict with the Holy Spirit. I should conclude the same, if the premises were just; but the necessary conclusion, to my mind, disproves the premises. The Trinity are agreed in one, and are one: if the Son had no dealing with all mankind, neither could the Spirit, neither could

the Father; but this is manifestly not true. A very large portion of Holy Writ, the utterance of the Father by the Spirit, addresses itself to the lost, as lost for ever, and, therefore, not the subjects of saving grace: nevertheless, addresses them in the language of remonstrance, of persuasion, even sometimes of entreaty, and all the pathos of rejected love, and ill-requited care. Perhaps the heart itself can best decide the question. We have had the Bible, we have read, we have heard it: it may be formally, it may be heedlessly, it may be unwillingly, it may be unbelievingly; and yet there have been moments when we wished there were no Bible, because we could not rid ourselves of what it says, "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." We will not receive it, but still it speaks again, "Notwithstanding be ye sure of this, the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." What is all that intent, that malignant hatred, with which the blaspheming infidel pursues the holy book, at the risk to himself of infamy, imprisonment, and ruin; but because there is a voice in it he wishes to put to silence? And whence the laboured lore with which the cold student tries to pervert, and misinterpret, and secularize the same holy book, but because there is a voice in it he desires to change? Men confute the Bible, and deny its inspiration; not because it does not, but because it does, call after them, unwelcome as the voice of God to them in Paradise.

Our simple first parents hid themselves in the trees of the garden; we have ten thousand hiding-places, multitudinous devices, and hydra-headed schemes, by which the world, the flesh, and the devil, combine to rid us of the unwelcome presence. The world that now is, its pleasures, and possessions, like the arbours of Eden, are

often made trial of: and forasmuch as they hide God from us, they do enable us in a measure to forget his presence. When these are insufficient, false-reasonings, false philosophy, above all, false religions, refuges of lies, are made the treacherous covertures of the terrified spirit. "Make to yourself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness." "A covenant with death." "An agreement with hell." "We have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves." Many a fear-stricken, but impenitent, soul, thus silenced and assuaged, cradled in error, goes peacefully to destruction.

When interest is made with earthly power to reprieve a criminal left for execution, delay is not the ulterior object; it is to gain time for suing out a pardon. When the blessed Redeemer paid for humanity the forfeit of original sin, to gain another probationary period, an arrest, as it were, of judgment, he did not leave it so; "Let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it and dung it: if it bear fruit well, if not, after that thou shalt cut it down." By voice, by word, by means and opportunities of grace, which the self-judging conscience hears, and knows it hears, and shall be hereafter made to own it has heard, I believe the spirit of truth does strive with all men, to a late, if not to the latest moment of existence—calls after us to tell us God is nigh—calls after us, "Return ye unto me;" "Turn ye at my reproof." But what is the consequence? "The carnal heart is enmity against God:" Who loves the presence of an enemy? Who loves an unfriendly eye fast fixed upon every movement, and penetrating every thought? Unless grace persuade men to repentance, the terrors of the Lord avail nothing but to increase the heart's inborn

enmity. Fear, without love, apprehension without hope, must either indurate the heart to stone, or crush it into powder; for it is more than the mind of man can bear. When the voice of God overtakes the godless ear, and the fear of God moves in the godless heart, and the conscious sinner is arrested in his flight, and forced to stand naked in his Maker's presence, does he confess, does he repent, does he plead, if happily the sin of his nature may be forgiven him? Adam did not: without the Gospel no man had ever done so: without the Gospel no man ever does. Adam did not say that he deserved to die: he did not ask what he could do to make atonement: he sought no pardon, he made no promise, he proposed no reconciliation. "The woman whom thou gavest me to be with me, she gave me of the tree." "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." It is the language of fallen humanity, the very mother-tongue of every unregenerate heart throughout the world; acknowledging the act, but not the principle of evil: conscious of the sin, but not of its sinfulness.

Because I read this in every part of Holy Writ, because I read it in every heart around me, and read it in my own, I have supposed that faith must precede repentance in every regenerate soul. This is not important; for, if faith and repentance be not simultaneously begotten, they must follow immediately the one upon the other: it does not signify whether they be twin sisters, or the one be the first begotten of the other, since they can never be manifested separately, and are equally necessary to salvation, and equally the work of the Spirit of God within us.

"Who told thee that thou wast naked?" Was it the world, that bids thee weave a costly web of human vir-

tues, merits, and observances, to clothe thyself withal? It is a small shame can be so lightly covered. Was it the flesh, that bids thee be content and easy: since so thou camest into the world, it is no fault of thine that so thou goest out? It is a light grief can be so slightly healed. Was it the devil, who, when neither of these will satisfy thy fears, bids thee lay violent hands upon thyself, and submit to thy misery and thy shame no longer? Or comes the conviction whence alone it brings repentance in its train—repentance not to be repented of, working sorrow after a godly sort: sorrow that a God might feel—sorrow that a God did feel, albeit incapable of repentance, when He took the loathsome body of that death into his holy arms, bound the corrupt carcase to his own pure bosom, and carried it, all offensive and putrescent, as it was, till he reached the only place where he could leave it? Yes: the believer does resemble Christ, is one with him, even in that in which it would seem the most impossible that Christ should be one with us: in that of which it might seem his humanity was incapable. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me:" "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me?" Did Paul and Jesus mean the same? Did they feel the same? Not quite; and yet not very different except in measure: not quite the same, because the blessed Redeemer had to abide the wrath and penalty, as well as imputation, of yet unforgiven and unexpiated sin: not very different, because they carried about with them the same detested burthen; loathed it with the same loathing; hated it with the same hatred; wept for it, groaned under it, with the same beseeching cries and tears; looked to be released from it with the same intense desire; quieted

themselves under it with no very different consolation? "Yet for this cause came I into the world:" "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Both Paul and Jesus were looking to the blessed consummation—to the cross where the triumph was achieved, by one for both—to the grave where the weary burthen was to be left, and the resurrection wherein all was to be swallowed up in victory. Yes, penitent, believing sinner, heart-stricken, and heart-broken: thy sorrow and the anguish of thy soul for sin, is in the likeness of the heavenly, not the earthly. The earthly never felt it; he never could have felt it, nor could you, were you not born again into the image of your Maker. Be comforted: there is no resemblance between your sorrow and the sorrow of the world that worketh death: there is no difference, very little difference, between yours and his who took the sting of death away. True: Jesus had no ways of sin to turn from and forsake: so far there is a difference; but it is not the necessity of doing this that afflicts you: you are not grieving for sin's pleasures lost, and gains prohibited: you are not loth to part with the world's evil practices: your grief is that these hated ones stay by you, cling to you, disgrace you, humble you, and put you to misery and shame. Even so they did to Jesus: oh! to what measure above measure; when it pleased the Father to put him to that shame—when he looked for pity and there was none—for comfort, and there was no man. But then they were not his own sins. Yes, they were; for he had made them his by voluntary assumption; and the Father had made them his by actual imputation: you have made them his, by acceding to the transfer, and receiving the imputation of his righteousness instead.

In one sense they were more his than ever since that transaction they have been yours; they were his to answer for, to atone for, to expiate and make an end of: they have ceased to be yours at all in that sense: they are not called yours in Heaven: for if the sins of the redeemed are written at all in the Lamb's book of life, they stand against his name, not against theirs. Why, then, in the days of his humiliation, should not our sins have been his to grieve for, to be worn out with, to be afraid of, to break his heart for? Jesus was afraid of something: it could not be of what man could do unto him: Jesus broke his righteous heart for something: it was not the nails, nor yet the spear that slew him. "The sting of death is sin:" Jesus would not have feared death, if that sting had not been in it. It was, it must have been the misery of sin, in all its bitterness, such as we feel it: with only that superadded which the truly penitent believer need not feel, although he sometimes does; the sense of the abiding of God's wrath upon it: or I should rather say upon us; for, upon sin God's wrath doth ever abide, and only not on us, because our trespasses are not imputed to us. Vengeance went with them—went where they went; and, like the bursting of concurrent thunder-clouds, expended its fury where all iniquities were made to meet, leaving them, like hovering vapours in the air, dark, threatening, fearful, and oppressive still, but powerless as the spent thunder-storm to shoot its bolt again. We must carefully distinguish between that which Christ bore *with* us, and that which he bore *for* us: lest we intrude upon his sole work of expiation, and profanely eat of that altar whereof they which served the tabernacle had no right to eat, participants as they were in everything besides.

In his holy hatred, his heavenly sensibility, his pure horror, his pious grief and weariness of sin, the christian penitent resembles Christ, but may not share his meritorious sufferings for it, or lay any endurance upon himself in expiation of it. He may fast, if it helps him to subdue his passions—he may denude himself of lawful gratifications and possessions, if it lessen his temptation to evil—he may subject himself to severe exercises of devotion, if he is sure it tends to the spiritualizing of his affections—but he must not do any of these things, or any other things, as an atonement, or as a punishment for sins committed. When was it known that any man who brake the laws of the land might judge, and sentence, and inflict punishment upon himself? and, before any one may exact its penalties from another, he must show his appointment to the judicial bench. Before any venture to prescribe penance or perform it, we challenge them to do the same: they are trespassers upon the office of their God, and must produce the credentials of their vicegerentship in his own writing.

But the Son of man could never feel remorse. This is true—He could not: I have thought much of this: and since He did not, I doubt if remorse, properly so called, is a rightful part of a believer's penitence. I doubt it besides for many other reasons. It is the main feature of the world's repentance;—of the devil's it is the only feature: it is the immortal canker-worm, and concentrated fire of hell, if it be not hell itself; and is the appointed earnest and foretaste of that hell on earth. What can the pardoned sinner, the justified believer, have to do with it? Remorse is moreover the most agonizing passion of which the human bosom is capable;

and quite incompatible with that peace and joy, which are the Spirit's fruit; the rest of a mind which is stayed upon God. Peace is compatible with grief: repose may abide with sorrow,—but neither with remorse. Is it not rather one of those sad remainders, of which there are so many, so painful and inveterate, of the olden nature in the regenerate heart, which it is the part of faith to protest against, of the indwelling Spirit to contend with, and the precious balm of Gilead to assuage and heal? May not the believer, who looks back upon his former sins, scarce know if the tears he sheds be grief or joy; so calm, so thankful, so submitted, should be his contrition and his shame? The same relief from the bitterness of self-reproach, which others falsely seek and falsely find in the endurance of the most unnatural, self-inflicted torments; which sometimes induces even the unsuspected criminal to deliver himself into the hands of justice; the Christian penitent should find, and adequately find, in contemplation of the sufferings of Christ, his substitute, and sacrifice, and representation.

But then I laid those sufferings upon him; and how can I bear that? the tortured soul replies. Nay, but *He* saw of the travail of his soul and was satisfied, and why not you? The only sorrow laid upon him that He bare not willingly, took not consentingly, was that of which He said, "But ye would not:" of which He says now, 'But ye will not: ye will brave it, and suffer it, and abide its consequence upon yourself, instead of casting your burthen upon me.'

The believing penitent needs this assurance; needs all that he can have, and more very often than he can take, though not more than God has provided for his consolation. There are moments in Christian experi-

ence, when all earth seems peopled with the risen shades of long-buried, and hitherto forgotten sins. "More in number than the hairs of my head." Yes: for these may be counted; there is a limit to them somewhere; I know at least where they are and where they are not, and which are they, and how to find them, and what is mine amongst them. But these! there is not a pathway that our feet have trodden; there is not a spot on which our feet have rested: in crowded city or in desert heath;—in social hall or solitary chamber;—a sound—a form—a name—a circumstance—that may not, at some time, recal the memory of something:—something said that cannot be unsaid: something done that cannot be undone: the lost that is never recovered, the past that is never retraced, the gone, that never comes again: the talking, writing, thinking, feeling, that no tears of penitence can blot away, or believing prayers efface the impression of: till but for the mark the Lord has set upon us, we might betake ourselves to the first murderer's cry, "Behold! every one that findeth me shall slay me!"

Is there one sunbeam so bright upon our earthly dwelling, that no dark mote will ever cross it over: a thought of how we sought it, how we got it, how we requited it, or how we used it? Know we one song of mirthfulness, or hymn of praise, that never wakens a strange note within: a chord that reverberates, "My sin, my sin?" When drank we of a cup of life so deadly, darkly mixed, it would not have been turned to sweetness on our lips, if that sole ingredient had been forgotten in it? Or passed hours so desolate, so lonely and bereaved, but they had one companionship too much—whispering, still whispering—"My sin, my

sin?" "I am not able to look up." How could he, when the wife of his bosom and the children of his love, even the Solomon that sat upon his throne, bore the indelible impress of his past iniquity? "The stone shall cry out of the wall; and the beam of the timber shall answer it:" and if these did not, there is one who would: we have had an accomplice in every evil thing, who waits only the opportunity to give evidence against us. And oh! the malignity of that witness, the cruel exactness of his memoranda, when he pursues after the sinner clean escaped from his toils; meets him in the sanctuary; joins him at his prayers; draws the curtains of his sick-bed; arouses him at midnight; with still the same word, "Remember"—"it was there, it was thus, it was then;" each little circumstance, each trifling aggravation, each possible construction, what no one knew, or could know, but ourselves, and he who was the abettor of it all. Yes—blessed be God, there is *One* other who knows,—and happy, most happy are we, if we have faith at such a moment to call on Him to answer the accusation. But the accuser knows his time, and chooses it always when our faith is weakest, our spirits lowest; our prospects clouded, and our Father absent. There are seasons when the anticipation of heaven itself is darkened, by the supposition that memory may follow us thither; and we are ready to say to ourselves, if Jordan's waters be no Lethe's stream, the land of promise can be no place of rest. Herein is the necessity again for more than pardon. The sinner cannot take his sins to heaven, and therefore will be purified and made holy before he departs: but if he take no more than the remembrance of them, without something to take his righteous grief

away, it would be no heaven to him. We doubt not the memory of our sins will follow us: how else can we sing that everlasting song which only redeemed and pardoned ones can learn? But there must be that in the manner of our salvation, which will put an end to all regrets and self-reproaches, and absorb entirely what now it only assuages, and just enables the believing penitent to bear. Will it not be, that the glory resulting to our Lord and Saviour from our redemption, will force us to glory even in our fall? while every remembered and once mourned-for sin, seems a bright jewel added to his crown? Jesus in heaven loves the memory of his woes; the high exaltation that results from his humiliation. May not we learn to do what he does; be reconciled to the memory of the guilt that caused it, and rejoice in the recollection of our shame? There is no sacrifice of broken hearts in heaven: where is there a scheme of salvation except this, that could suffice to heal them?

Need we pause to tell the heart-whole sinner what we are talking about? It would be hard to do it. He must first cut off the rapacious hand, and pluck out the lustful eye: and when he has done it, still see the spectral shadow of them flitting for ever near him; feel the dead carcase of them still adhering to his renewed and living flesh. He must first learn what David meant—"No soundness in my flesh because of thine anger—no rest in my body because of my sins:" and what the Spirit that spake of Jesus meant—"Shame hath covered my face, reproach hath broken my heart:" lessons never learned by an unawakened, unregenerate soul; features of Christian repentance that have no type or semblance in the natural heart's fear of sin in

its consequences while itself is loved: while the sins of our bosom are a forbidden treasure, rather than a burthen. The fear is then lest they be found upon us —the sorrow that ever we must yield them up, or be called in question for the prohibited possession: these are no other than the strong man's goods, which gave no disturbance to his palace, until a stronger came to make a spoil of them. There are few things in religion more incomprehensible and offensive to an unbelieving world, than the manifestations of true repentance: the mixed contrition and confidence of the believer: which instead of rising and falling alternately, like adverse weights on a suspended balance, are seen to sink and rise, and go and come together, like things that float upon the moving tide. "We have mourned," "we have piped," but in vain. The eye that the world's mirth or its praises fills with penitent tears, lights up with joy before its fears and accusations: the heart that cannot dance in the boastful piping-time of prosperous folly, for thought of what has been, and fear of what may be: in the mourning time of numbered years, and disappointed hopes, and judgments overhanging,—age coming, earth receding, death approaching; cannot weep for thought of all his mercies past, and expectations of approaching glory. The chief of sinners, the elect of God, is as little reconcileable with an unbelieving world in the one character as the other: enthusiast alike in grief and joy, in very near proportion one to the other: for faith and repentance live and grow together. The deepest conviction of sin lays firmest hold of Christ: and the nearest approach to Christ, gives the most intimate knowledge of sin's enormity: as light grows vivid in increasing darkness,

and darkness darker by the approach of light: the brightest circle round the growing moon, best shows the dark opaque that it encloses.

Nevertheless, the grace of God deals differently with different minds: and very much in unison with our natural constitutions. Sensitive, irresolute, and apprehensive minds, taste often of the sourness of the unripened fruit, grown though it be upon a living stem; before they know the richness and sweetness of its maturity. Repentance, deep-seated consciousness and dread of sin, seems to be all their experience of the Gospel: all that the Spirit can produce upon them: and missing the consolations others speak of, adds fear to their sorrow, under the apprehension that since they have no confidence, they have no faith; and thus but half the necessary evidence of divine life within. But this is not really so. The living seed shoots upward and shoots downward not always equally. Some trees of Jehovah's planting have deep roots and slender stems: like things that are sown in winter-time, and may not venture upward till the spring. This is not a beautiful, and often not a healthful state: but still it is a living and a growing one. I think it is a state of which the Scripture speaks with peculiar tenderness: such tenderness as a loving father might feel for an infirm and sickly child: more dear in some sense than his more healthful brethren, although less pleasant and delightsome to him. It may be winter yet; and some winters are very long: but the ripening time will come. I do not say such Christians should be satisfied: nobody should be satisfied with less than the full stature of Christ, and the full fruit of the Holy Spirit: but they may be secure:

repentance is the root of spiritual life; and not more sure is it that without a root no life can be sustained; than that there cannot be a growing, spreading root, without the life be in it. Others there are, of frank, decisive, and courageous minds, in the full maturity of a firm and ardent faith, feasting in all the plenitude of Jesus' love: spoiled favourites, as it might be, of a father's house; fast-growing ornaments of the master's garden: who feel at times distressed by representations such as we have made, of the nature of true repentance: because they never felt the burthen and anguish of a broken heart, a tortured memory, or an indwelling curse. They are sure that they believe, possess, enjoy: the fruits of faith are rich and ripe upon the branches, but have they any root? Have they sufficient evidence of a work of grace? Yes, for without a living root, those luxuriant branches could not spread and blossom; it is summer-time, and summer-planted things grow very fast above. Have patience, it will not be summer always; the good husbandman knows the pruning-time, and much as he delights in all this beauty, this peace, and confidence, and joy, which gives him so much glory, and does so much honour to his husbandry; be sure that he will presently prune it all away, and force it to strike a deeper and a firmer root. It may, I think, be generally remarked, that persons who have strong convictions and much suffering for sin in the progress of their religious experience, have less conflict with Satan at the close: while those who at no time of their lives have passed those deep waters through, will generally meet them in great force upon their death-beds. Meantime, we say of repentance as we said of faith, it is not the much or the little;

it is the *reality* that gives proof of life. "Except ye repent," not so much or so much, but, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

There is one character of true repentance that may test us all; those that weep and them that rejoice, those that feel the burthen of their sins so heavy, they cannot sing for pain, and those that have so strong a sense of pardon, they cannot weep for gladness. Have we forsaken them? are we trying to forsake them—those sins so felt, so pardoned? In the one case it is almost sure to be so; for men are not slow to part with their tormentors, which makes the wintry soul sometimes the safer. If in the other case it be not so, and the confident believer is seen dallying with the sins, whose bitterness he tastes not: there is no evidence of repentance at all; and since the most decisive evidence of faith is wanting, we scarcely perceive the ground of his assurance. Such is not the probable result of a strong and sanguine faith. I am very far from believing that the Christian who takes his post upon the highest ground of confidence and assurance in the justifying righteousness of Christ, even if his conviction of sin be not at first, as it is most likely to be sooner or later, proportionately strong, will not be the most successful combatant against the world, the flesh, and the Devil. Meantime the question is not of success, and it is not of courage even: as a test of repentance, it is of a simple and an honest purpose, to forsake sin and return unto the Lord our God, determined to walk henceforth in his most holy ways. Such honesty is capable of many kinds of proof. The penitent who says, 'I have given up that pleasure, that pursuit, because I believed it to be sinful in the sight of God;

but I do not hate it; if I might, I would enjoy it still:' and another who says, "I hate this evil habit, this unholy temper, it is the curse and torment of my life; but I have not conquered it, I am sinning by it still:" give both, though diversely, a proof of true repentance: imperfect both, yet honest. The one gives up what he loves for Jesus' sake, and so makes the greater sacrifice; the other hates the evil Jesus hates, and so is more nearly conformed to his holy mind; the first will be generally the young believer's evidence, the last more commonly that of the advanced believer.

There is a mistake not unfrequently made upon this subject, which I would call attention to. We hear it said, 'You had better go to the place of amusement—the play, the dance,—than stay at home and wish that you might go.' No, we had not better, the one is in our power, the other is not. Stay your foot, stay your hand, depart from sin, and prove your honesty by doing what you can. God will presently turn your hearts to hate it; meantime you make now, what you will not have an opportunity to make when you are more advanced, the sacrifice of your inclination to his will. And oh! be sure he loves it, although it is the sacrifice of a still earthly taste; a poor offering of unripe fruits; the mere baby present of a first-blown flower, which never Father looked upon unkindly. Again, we hear it said, it is a less sin to partake of worldly practices and worldly pride, to neglect the service or misuse the sabbath, than to indulge in evil tempers and unholy thoughts at home. It might be so or not, if these were indeed indulged; it is hard to say what sin God esteems the greatest; but there is this difference, and it is a vital one; it is everything in the

Father's sight. The man who stays not his foot from the Sabbath to pollute it, from the world's vanities to encourage and partake of them, does it wilfully, willingly, and of deliberate purpose; he could refrain if he would, from the first moment he suspects it to be wrong: whereas the man who sins in his thoughts, in his tempers, in his long-indulged and now inveterate habits, may do it against his will, against his resolution, his purpose, and his prayers. I do not say it is not sin; the believer who so sins will be the last to say so: he does not say so before the mercy-seat, to which he brings his daily, his painful, his disgraceful wounds, received in conflict with the indwelling foe: but the beaten soldier taken with arms in his hand, is not the poltroon who throws them away, and lays him down to sleep. In the early morning of a believer's travail, the world, with its opposition, its interests and delights, seems the most formidable enemy, and is usually the first to be encountered; but as the day of grace advances, and the mind becomes more assimilated to the mind of God, the world loses so much of its power by the diminution of its influence and attractions, that neither its opposition nor its blandishments need very much resistance. But it is just when the first skirmishing relaxes, and this light phalanx flies, that the victor has to meet a deadlier foe; the indwelling sins of his own heart and mind; hosts that he did not know were there, or did not know that they were enemies; or how they would rise up in opposition to his better will, to be at once his torment and his shame. If ever these be mastered, or in proportion as they are, the giant foe, the Goliath who was there from the beginning, setting the battle in array against us, his forces

scattered, may be encountered alone: but oh! he will be vanquished then. One deadly struggle some have had with Satan at the last: the hardest, it is said, of all. Others, when the world and the flesh were overcome and done with, have met the giant enemy by himself, only to see him fall before the name of Jesus. A conflict such as this our blessed Saviour had, and such a victory won; notwithstanding that he could not exhibit the whole character of repentance, because he had no sins to turn from and forsake. If we want his example, we want not his sympathy and active participation in the strife. What he did not in his own person and for himself, by his Spirit, he is pledged to do for us and in us. We are startled sometimes, and cast down at the exception, "Tempted like as we are, only without sin:" that *only* seems the very gist of our despair: without sin, we could defy the Devil and the world, and come off conquerors too: and if it be so that Jesus shared with us the burden, the hatred and the sorrow, whose likeness, whose example, whose sympathy have we in this strife within? We have it all in Jesus, however at first it may seem otherwise. If we have faith enough to separate our sins from ourselves, as God has separated them,—"Far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us;" to behold in them something that is no longer ours, except to contend with, to shun, to grieve for and subdue, even so as they are Christ's; then shall we recover the seemingly spoiled likeness; then may the poor penitent tread the footsteps of the captain of his salvation, throughout the whole warfare, which is not ours, but his; not so much his for us, as ours for him; since it is He that has undertaken it, and He that is pledged to

accomplish it, and He that shall wear the laurels of the victory; except as He is pleased to reward with them our poor feeble aid: as generals distribute honours without losing their own glory, in acknowledgment of service done them in the field. "The battle is not yours, but God's." The apostle Paul could thus separate his sin from himself, and speak of them as two "It is no more I:" not to make up his quarrel with it, and relieve himself from the conflict and the shame: for then he need not have added that bitter exclamation; but that he might give thanks before the field was won, and sing the song of triumph in the day of slaughter.

CHAPTER X.

IN HIS SANCTIFYING GRACE.

HITHERTO, in redemption, justification, and regeneration, we have claimed the work of man's recovery all for God: without counsel, without agency, without instrumentality or help of any kind, save the concurrent but several operations of the Most Holy Trinity; wherein by very inadequate and perhaps inapplicable language, such as we have, the Father is said to operate by the Son, and both by the Holy Spirit; though all are one, Jehovah; and each the mover, not the mere agent, of his own separate operation. Effectually, the work of salvation remains in the same Almighty hand throughout: for to the last as at first, "It is God that worketh in us to will and to do." But there is a point from which He works generally, perhaps always, by instrumentality: not putting out of his gracious power the labour, or the issue, or the responsibility, if I may so speak, and certainly not the glory of that which He has undertaken to accomplish; but taking into his hand tools, agents, instruments and means, through which to dispense his grace, and br ng the renewed soul to maturity. Then it is that He is pleased to make us the instruments of our own, as well as of each other's conversion; commanding us at one time to sanctify

ourselves, at another time to sanctify somebody or something else; and even on some occasions, to sanctify himself; giving an apparent variability to the word, which on examination perhaps, may not be found essential. In this gracious labour, wherein our own agency, our free and willing agency is demanded, we have not only his grace to work with, and his strength to work in, but we have also his example, the method and order of his workmanship, by which to regulate our own; so that in every sense we may work together with Him on our own behalf. Might he not well call the yoke easy and the burden light, so surely guided, so securely carried; so much heavenly light without, so much spiritual energy within? It should not—we cannot reflect upon it, and not feel it should not—be the uneven and the toilsome course it often is. God never meant it so; but we, poor helpmates as we are, we spoil the little that is entrusted to us, and reap the consequences of our dulness, indolence, or unsteadiness, in many a fall, and many a retrograde step; and days and nights of toil, that might with more carefulness and diligence have been spared us. "A bullock unaccustomed to the yoke." Happy as we are in the belief that our final salvation does not depend upon ourselves, there is much, much more perhaps than we know, that still does depend upon ourselves; deeply affecting our passage to the eternal world, and probably the condition in which we enter it, and the place assigned to us in it. All human merit out of the question as a claim on Deity, it cannot be overlooked, that our heavenly Father's government in the kingdom of grace, comprises a system of rewards and punishments: remedial rather than judicial, I believe, and strictly parental; not dealing

according to our sins, nor rewarding according to our iniquities; all love, all sympathy, all indulgence, but indicative of approbation or displeasure; dispensing reproof and encouragement by turns; bitters or sweets as they are found necessary. What well-governed child in a loving father's house, finds not his treatment affected by his own conduct, though he neither earns nor merits all the benefits he enjoys? Never did manhood look back upon childhood's follies, lost time, and wasted opportunities, and wilful opposition, with more self-condemning justice and regret, than the advanced believer on the early period of his spiritual life; so embittered, so impeded and disgraced, by his own childishness and folly; working against, instead of with, the Holy Spirit's teaching. Let it never be supposed or suggested that the believer can do nothing, has nothing to do, to advance or retard the progress of his own sanctification, and deeply affecting that of others. It is a dangerous persuasion to begin a religious course with; we never end it so. We are instruments, all instruments, means, agents, channels of God's grace; responsible in that character to Him, to each other and ourselves: wherein every man's work shall be made manifest: "if it abide, he shall receive a reward; if it be burnt, he shall suffer loss, though he himself be saved." If it is primarily so spoken of the ministry, it is true of every believer, who is a priest at least to God and to himself: a labourer together with God at least in the temple of his own bosom. There are few, if any of us, whose influence extends no further, whose responsible ministry terminates with ourselves.

The first work of sanctification on the part of God, appears to be separation. "I am the Lord your God,

which have separated you from all people." The importance attached to this disseverment of the people of God from mankind at large, in order to their sanctification, is striking and impressive throughout the Old Testament. Sometimes separation is the assigned reason why Israel should be holy, or it is alleged as a proof that they actually are so. "Ye shall be holy unto me, for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people." At other times, holiness is the end to be attained by separation. "That thou mayest be a holy people to the Lord thy God:" or it is the plea of the people themselves before him, to hearken unto them in all that they call upon Him for;—"For thou didst separate us from among all the people upon earth." Alternately their claim on Him, and His on them: loved sometimes because He separated them, and separated sometimes because He loved them: at one time the obedience to which all blessings are attached, and then the blessing attached to all obedience: pledge and remonstrance, command and promise by turns; the source of their advantage, the aggravation of their guilt; the occasion of interference for them against their enemies, the necessity for letting their enemies prevail against them:—SEPARATION never ceases to be exhibited in the Old Testament dispensation as the origin, the object, the evidence, or the necessity, of Israel's being a sanctified and holy people.

In perfect unison with it, is the language of the New Testament. "Come out from among them, my people." "Be ye separate, saith the Lord." "Separated unto the Gospel." Chosen out of the world— called out—redeemed out—sealed out—aye, and cast out. "For blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and shall sepa-

rate you, and cast out your name as evil." How separate stand such names already in heaven's books; and oh! how separate "in that day" all shall stand, the one on the right hand, the other on the left, waiting the fiat of eternal separation. Is there, between the beginning and the end—can there be a moment before that day arrives, when the people of God need not be a detached and separated people? The world likes to think so; Satan likes to say so; and I am afraid we like to think so too. It is a christianized world we live in; it is a baptized, a regenerated world: what have we now to do to detach ourselves from it, and stand apart, as if we alone were holy? But if the case were so, we need not be called upon in baptism to renounce it, this christianized, renewed, regenerated world. Why enlist us for soldiers where peace is made with all! The time will come, I doubt not, when the earth and all that is therein shall be safe and innoxious to a faithful and obedient people; but never till the kingdoms of this world shall be the kingdoms of our Lord, and the prince of this world shall be bound, that he may not deceive the nations any more Until this be fulfilled, Jehovah does his work as he has always done it. When Jesus sends his regenerating spirit into the heart, and puts the seal of adoption on the brow; writes his own name upon our forehead, and ours upon his breast-plate; he does effectually sever every regenerate soul from the mass of corrupt humanity, to be a holy people to himself. The least visible separation is not the least real: the sole entrance-gate is no less narrow, the unhallowing, unsanctifying influence of communion with the ungodly is no less ruinous and no less forbidden, in the spiritual than in the temporal Israel. Is it not with Christians, as

it was with Jews, that in which we are most tempted to resist, instead of promoting the work of sanctification?

Following the method of God's own gracious workmanship, bearing in mind how determinate was the line of demarcation in the typical and temporal separation, with all the forewarnings, and all the prohibitions, the wrath, the sin, the misery, and ruin that followed to Israel from their intermixture with the heathen, and adoption of Gentile practices: the first act of christian profession, is an act of separation, called in our baptismal service, Renunciation, in which the servant of Christ engages, not only to separate from, but to fight against the world—against the sins in which the world lies buried, and the devil who reigns over it. Why then, in the developement of the new life within us, are we so slow to see the design and necessity of this detachment, and so commonly set ourselves in opposition to it; as much against our own vows, as against the dealing and purposes of our heavenly Father? I believe there are various motives for this reluctance to give up the world; not all of equal obliquity, but surely all mistaken. Satan does not, because he cannot, act upon all dispositions with the same opiate draught; but he has one for each, and either one will do, if he can but persuade us to it. In venturesome and unsuspicious natures, I believe the unwillingness to seclude ourselves from worldly society, is often attributable to an honest and a kindly purpose to benefit the ungodly and the unbelieving, by the influence and exhibition of our spiritual gifts and graces. It is a righteous motive, and *if* the result were surer, the act might be righteous too; for christians are, or ought to be, the lights of a dark world. But too much is risked on this unpromising

adventure. We need be very sure of a divine energy and a perfect heart, before we act so much against our Lord's general declarations; so much in accordance with the carnal tendencies and affections of our earthly nature. There was One in mortal form who ate with publicans and sinners: but He was essential light, and in Him was no darkness at all; and no contact of darkness could obscure his light, or cause it, for one moment to be hidden or mistaken. In the presence of this blessed example, I cannot say that no believer, at any time, for any purpose, may join himself in social intercourse with the ungodly: but I say, that whenever he voluntarily does so, the likeness of his blessed master must be on him as well as in him; observable to others in all he does and says, as well as conscious to himself in all he desires and intends. The light he sheds around had need be brighter than earthly lights are apt to be: the heart he takes with him had need be less treacherous than most hearts are. Generally, the result will bear out the predominant language of Scripture on the subject: the adventurer will win more scathe than laurels, by these generous, but ill-disciplined encounters on forbidden ground. The disposition most inclined to it, is by its very amenity the most likely to suffer from worldly influence; and confidence and incaution are very near akin. For the most part, the influence of spiritual graces on an unbelieving world will be found, by experience, to follow an opposite course: the city most seen is that which is set upon a hill—the most luminous candle is that which is put upon a candlestick,—not those that are found upon the common level of surrounding things.

Another cause of hesitation, offspring of a no less kindly, though less courageous feeling, is the doubt,

in times like these, who are and who are not the people of God: we are unwilling even tacitly to judge and to condemn, by separating ourselves from a community of professing christians, whose hearts we cannot read. Perhaps this difficulty is greater now than it ever was before; and perhaps Almighty wisdom will presently interpose to make it less, by leaving his forsaken ensign on a hill, where neither it, nor the way to it, nor the followers of it, can be any more mistaken, or confounded with its enemies and betrayers. Whenever this day comes, I believe the sanctity of his earthly temple, the hallowed influence of his detached and separated church will be proportionably greater: the concentrated light proportionately purer; and Christ's united ones more true to their faith, to Him, and to themselves. Meantime, the increase of danger needs increase of caution—increase of firmness and decision, as well as discrimination. God has not changed the signs and evidences of grace, the "spot of his children:" they may be assumed, and we may be deceived; but where there is no profession, we have no right to suppose belief—no right to suppose existence without a sign of life. We may expect the bud to blossom, and the blossom to bear, and be chargeable with nothing more than an error in judgment, if it turn out barren; but where there is neither bud nor blossom, nor stem of promise, nor perceptible living root to bear one, we have no right to anticipate a future gathering. If a person makes no confession of Christ, or profession of the Gospel; gives no sign of conversion, or token of the renewing of the Holy Ghost, it is not charity that accepts such a one, for that which he neither professes to be, nor desires to be taken for—a new creature. Most commonly, where

the fruits of the Spirit are not, the fruits of the flesh will be: and they "are manifest" the Scripture says; and Charity may not controvert the divine direction,—"By their fruits ye shall know them."

There is yet another plea for the postponed detachment, the most amiable perhaps of all: the painful misgivings of a penitent heart—the lowly timidity of a contrite spirit, self-accused of coldness, unfruitfulness, half-heartedness, and indecision. "What am I, and what is my father's house?" 'What have I been heretofore? What may I prove to be at last, if God forsake me, and my profession be a false one? Is it for such a one as I am, to take my place among the people of God, and set myself apart as holy unto the Lord? I wait to be more confident and assured of my own state.' It is the hesitation of an honest heart, and I can believe our heavenly Father looks upon it with indulgent patience. Nevertheless, it is a mistaken and injurious delay: it serves but to prolong our indecision, and keep our faith unsettled. In earthly policy, who does not know how effectual it is to make a man commit himself, as it is called—avow himself a convert—be known as a partizan,—he cannot then draw back, he is pledged, he is committed? Many a great, and greatly wicked deed has been accomplished solely because men were thus forced to go forward where they were ashamed to go back. The same force of human opinion and human expectation over the mind, is capable of a good as well as evil application, and capable of acting for, as it so powerfully does against our spiritual advancement: the more so, in this case, that the honour of God and the credit of religion are compromised together with our own, and we cannot shame ourselves without shaming our profession—"put-

ting the Son of God to open shame." Is it not a legitimate stimulus, which we should do well to bring to bear upon ourselves? Whereas, our continued identification with the children of this world, will excuse us to ourselves for many laxities, and give them many a costly claim upon us; affording to Satan many opportunities to surprise and to beguile us, which a more decided and open separation would put an end to. It is, in truth, the first step toward that very sanctification, the conscious want of which induces us to delay it. And to whom is an infected atmosphere so dangerous, as to the weak and scarcely convalescing patient?

Unbelief is at the root of all. We do not take God's word either for what He promises or what He requires. We do not believe, much less know, as the Apostle did, that "We are of God, and that the whole world lieth in wickedness." After all we have witnessed, learned, received, experienced of his truth, we are but half convinced "how the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel." Israel did not believe it, when they left the altars, the pictures, and high places they were commanded to throw down, and made marriages with the heathen they were commanded to exterminate: most of all, and worse than all, when to be rid of the most blessed distinction conferred upon them, they desired a king after the manner of the nations. "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and I will be a Father to you, and ye shall be my sons and my daughters, saith the Lord God Almighty." Do we believe it? Do we desire it? Do we love this high and holy distinction, when under the names of liberality, conciliation, unity, and conformity, we make a wilful and venturesome attempt to be as little distinguishable as pos-

sible from those whom our Father hath not called by his name, hath not reigned over? As if the separation were an evil instead of a blessing; a sentence of privation and disgrace, instead of a pledge and foretaste of eternal glory? The tares and the wheat are decreed to grow together, but not in equal, indistinguishable mass. God's purpose has been misunderstood in the manner of the union, as well as of the separation; for, while some refuse to live and grow together, and feeling the difficulties opposed to their spiritual progress by the common contact and intercourse of life, have outrun the purpose of the Father for his children, and exceeded the prayer of the Son for his disciples, by taking themselves out of it, and seeking safety and sanctity in the cloister; others misconstrue the import of the delay, as if that which grows together, must grow into agreement, and be seen in indistinguishable likeness till the sickle levels and the binder parts it. Alas! if it could be so, which it cannot, before that time comes, the wheat will have borne wheat, and the tares will have borne tares after their kind: a first fruit of guilty compromise and painful indecision will have been already gathered and presented, unhallowed offering of unclean hands, on God's most holy altars; and there will spring up when we are gone, an after-produce, to be gathered perhaps of our own best-beloved, from the remaining influence of our teaching and example.

"Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world;" Jesus was in it: He was never of it. Christians perhaps mistake, I am sure the world mistakes, the reason, as well as nature of the separation. It is no arbitrary enactment of the Father's mere pleasure, to be carried out by the pride and self-exaltation of the

children. When a low-born child is adopted, when a lowly bride is chosen into some noble family, it becomes indispensable that they be separated from former things, habits, and practices, and most of all associations; not to forget what they have been, or grow high-minded on what they are, but because their position is changed:—not more than God's adopted children, the Redeemer's chosen bride:—what suited them before, does not become them now; interferes with their new duties, and dishonours their new name, and impedes their adaptation to their new sphere. We have no difficulty in deciding what manner of withdrawment would be necessary and what assumptuous in such cases. I think the analogy is very close: "Henceforth I call ye not servants, but friends." What may the friend do, or not do, the son, the bride, albeit servants once, unlike to them that serve?

May they live together in one house? Yes. May they benevolently love each other? Yes. May they feel for each other's sufferings, and rejoice in each other's welfare, and do the most they can to promote the one, and alleviate the other? All this they may do, and much more, in the common sympathies and kindly offices of life. But we know withal what they may not do: they may not pass their time together; they may not seek their pleasures together; they may not live alike, and look alike, and talk alike, so as to be mistaken the one for the other, for lack of anything external to distinguish them: they may not, on one side at least, be ruled by the opinions, or conformed to the maxims, or led by the persuasions of the other. True, in the believer's case, the world admits not the distinction, understands not the elevation, and denies the high pretension. The child of God must be content with

this; he cannot impart to others his own faith; the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen: he must abide the contumely of those who deride his pretension, and the opposition of those who are offended by it: waiting "the manifestation of the sons of God;" and comforted in that he is not the first to whom it has been said, "Whom makest thou thyself." There is but one evidence of our adoption, an unbelieving world can be required to admit; and adverse as the natural heart is to both the profession and the fruits of faith, it is no inapt judge of the one as connected with the other. "What manner of persons ought ye to be?" is a question as often asked by unbelief, as by the believing, and sometimes more accurately answered. The world knows very well that a person professing the Gospel of Jesus Christ, cannot consistently do as others do. And Satan knows it: and they conspire together to divert the godly man from his peculiarities, for the express purpose of falsifying his profession. Good angels know it, sent to us like one from Gilgal, with remonstrances, "Why have ye done this?"—sent perhaps to do for us what we will not for ourselves, and bring us out, or drive us out of some unhallowed fellowship. The same Almighty wisdom that sent Abraham to exile, Joseph to imprisonment, and Moses to the sheep-walk, and Daniel to the captivity, to prepare them for his own great and special services; does still by acts of providence, by hard and heavy strokes, losses, reverses, accidents, something that takes us from the world, or takes the world from us, separate and prepare us for the incoming of his grace. "Through much tribulation ye must enter into the kingdom." The word is often verified before a sinner is admitted to the earthly

kingdom; especially if appointed to some special ministration, or striking exhibition of the power of grace; always, I believe, before sin and earthliness can be so separated from us, as to fit us for admission into the kingdom of glory. And though tribulation is the work of providence, in which we may have no choice for more or less, or sooner or later; because God only knows when to send the sunshine and the rain, and which will fructify, and which will blight: it may be with us to promote or to counteract, to abbreviate or to prolong, to make necessary or unnecessary these earth-severing strokes: sent often to do what we might have done without them; making of the very cords that held us to the world, a scourge to drive us out. "They shall be scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes;" not that we may perish from off the good land that the Lord has given us: but that we may flee out of some evil land, some Sodom of our own choosing.

But if separation be the beginning of sanctification it is not the whole: for whereas there cannot be dedication to God, until there first be separation from the world, because whosoever is the friend of the world, is the enemy of God; so cannot separation avail anything alone except there be dedication also. "For myself:" it is his own blessed, his own gracious word; as if though the world is his, and the fulness thereof, he desired something more; as if He, whose are the cattle on a thousand hills, should tell us that He is hungry and wants something for himself,—a little flock that he may call his own.—"The Lord's portion is his people."

Whatever it has pleased God at any time to detach from common uses, has been hallowed to a purpose, devoted to a use, directed to some special end and aim. The Sabbath,

for instance, which He calls His throughout. When God separated the one day from the six, it was not to idleness, and uselessness, and waste. We call it a day of rest: and so it is from common uses, and earthly cares, and labours, but only to be dedicated to other purposes; to God and the things of God; his word, his works, his service and his people, claim the separated labours of the holy day.

"They shall be mine," saith the Lord. He has not called upon his people to renounce the world, that they may pass their lives in joyless, spiritless inanity, like weary denizens of a stranger's land. He has not forbidden us to love the world, or the things of the world, that we may abide the waste, and endure the void of disoccupied affections, and objectless desires, with nothing to love, nothing to pursue or to enjoy. The Gospel does not stay the common courses in which life's powers, and interests, and activities were used to run; time, money, talent, thought, feeling, taste, all intellectual faculties and temporal possessions; that we may throw them back to Him who gave them, as a useless burden or a treacherous snare. Job's eye had not seen the Lord, in all the characters of redeeming love, when he charged his Maker with having destroyed the hope of man; and vainer than the flower that is cut down, and emptier than the shadow that fleeth; more weary than the hireling till his day be accomplished, and more unpromising than the tree that waxeth old in the earth, proposed only to wait out "his appointed time, until his change should come." Some Christians adopt his language, but what saith the blessed Jesus? "There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or

children, or lands, for my sake and the Gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred-fold *now in this time*, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands." What does it mean, but that all earthly blessings, all things that God at first made good, and in his goodness gave, preferred before Him, enjoyed apart from Him, and loved instead of Him, must be surrendered into his jealous hands: dedicated and given up to Him, his forfeit as Creator, his re-purchase as Redeemer, his right as king and conqueror of the world; to be received by us again as his, and not as ours; a hundred-fold more precious, a hundred-fold more lovely and more loved, more safe, more beautiful, more enjoyable as the gift of the Beloved; to be shared, possessed, enjoyed with Him who bought both us and ours, "for himself," and so a hundred-fold "for us." "All things are yours, for ye are Christ's." What makes the uncostly bauble precious, received from a loving hand? What makes the homely fare so sweet, partaken at friendship's board? And why can grief please itself with worn and worthless relics? Because they are, or because they were, another's; some one we loved; he gave them us, or we gave them him; he made them, he used them, or he liked them. Oh! if we know what value the merest nothings can acquire thus, we may read the meaning of that "hundred-fold." Let us only believe that Jesus bought of the Father all this forfeited world; made it his own that he might restore it to us; took the curse out of it, to make it safe; accepts it of us, that he may add value to it, and shares it with us, that we may like it better.—"Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price." Faculties, powers, and possessions, all are included, all are claimed, all are to

be dedicated to himself; brought into his storehouse, that it may be filled. "That there may be meat in mine house, saith the Lord." But not that we may be left empty; weary, vapid, and despoiled of all present good, to wait for a vague hereafter, an untasted future. "Prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough." It is most true; there is not room enough; and the restricted bosom sometimes toils under the sense of undefined, illimitable good, wanting capacity to take it in: never, I believe, has there been wrung from misery's self a desire more urgent to put off the flesh, than is sometimes felt in the full heart's insufficiency to compass all that God gives us to enjoy in Him.

There is much practical difficulty, we do not deny it, as to the manner in which we may dedicate to the God of Heaven ourselves, and all that makes a part of ourselves, or belongs to us on earth. Were it not for the enduring patience, the indulgent pity with which our heavenly Father waits upon our childish blunders and mistakes, accepting the intention for the deed, knowing us for no other and no wiser than we are; it is a responsibility in which we might well despair to meet his holy purposes. The believer's continued residence in a world at enmity with God and inimical to godliness, with the indwelling of an olden and still carnal nature, making evil what would else be good and dangerous what would otherwise be safe; occasions perpetual difficulty to the most honest and perfect heart, in what manner to dedicate and restore to God the abundance of his misused and embezzled gifts, so that nothing may be lost. God's law is exceeding broad, and the view we

take of it is exceeding narrow; whence it comes to pass, that we have 'Mammons' and 'Antimammons,' and nobody is the wiser: we have communities of brethren, and societies of friends, and nobody is the better; we have commonality of goods, and eccentricities of speech, and peculiarities of dress, self-denying ordinances and self-destroying penances, till the bounties of nature, the order of providence, the proprieties and decencies of life, are all despised and outraged, by the capricious workings of true and honest hearts, really intent on their own sanctification, in the dedication of themselves to God. But, whoever is the loser,—and much is lost, of peace and unity, and social kindness, and temporal enjoyment,—God is not the gainer, in gratitude, in service, in the honour of his name, the interest of his religion, or the welfare and happiness of his family on earth. I affect not to make straight what so many have concurred to make crooked. Next to the study of God's word, I think the study of his works is most likely to guide us right: his works in nature and providence, as well as grace; in things seen as well as unseen; exhibited in facts, as well as in revealed purposes. Jehovah's word and his works can never be at variance; neither one word nor one work at variance with the other: creation is not contravened by redemption, neither is providence at cross-purposes with grace. We should be surprised to learn that anything that God has created and made, is become incapable of a right and proper use; or that any thing his providence now puts us in possession of is incapable of a sanctified and righteous occupation. True, sin has laid the first great design in ruins; the foul weeds have grown over it, and the cormorant and the bittern have made their nest therein. But it has been

redeemed; it is to be renewed, to be built up again: not one atom of the material has been destroyed or despoiled. Let us dig, let us toil; despite of dust and mire, mid venomous reptiles, and rank and poisonous weeds, to draw forth, bit by bit, of this exquisite workmanship: not saying, 'This was exquisitely wrought, but it is useless now—this was once beautiful, but now it is vile and worthless;' throwing all aside as waste and cumbersome rubbish. Rather let us find what each separate part was meant for; how one was applied, where another was fitted in, if it may be to discover, as skilful architects and limners can, the whole design by the proportion and adaptation of the dislocated parts. Every separate affection, every separate faculty, talent, and possession, is of God; a beautiful part of a once perfect whole: it has been in the power of man to displace, to misuse, to pollute, and throw all into confusion: it has not been in his power to destroy one, or to add one. What man can do, he may undo; what he can make, he may unmake; and what God employs men to do or to make, he may employ them to pull down and to destroy. Not so with the works of his own hand—not so with his creative labours. He said, "Let there be light:" and not all the iniquity that light has seen, and all the horrors that have been transacted by it; not all the guilt and misery that would have fain escaped it, or bitter curses that lost souls have heaped upon it, have prevailed to extinguish a single beam. I believe it is the same with all things; not one atom of God's creation is really lost or really gone; nor one faculty of mind, or property of matter withdrawn or added; but all in keeping to be restored. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will build it up again." They

did what they could: they nailed the body to the cross, and laid in the grave, and thought they had destroyed it. The same power that brought forth his own human body in incorruption, that He might exalt it to a glorious immortality, will bring forth anew his beautiful creation, and vindicate his purpose in all that He has made, before He gives up the dominion to the Father. I do not say that we are to do it: but, I say it is that work of sanctification—that rebuilding, renewing, restoration work; in which He who undertakes it requires that we be labourers together with Him. We have done all we can, with Satan's help, to lay the temple in ruins; we must do all we can, with the Spirit's help, to restore it to its original beauty and proportion. I am sure this may not be done by throwing away as spoiled the beautiful material, and putting contempt upon all natural and providential gifts. I think it may best be done by taking a broad principle, and acting upon it with minute and watchful care. Persuaded that all which comes from God is good, and all that God ordains is beneficial: all his gifts and his appointments being not only good in themselves, but good to us and for us, despite the interference of time and circumstance, of sin, the devil, and the flesh; I think we should apply ourselves in every the least particular, to discern what we have received, and are daily receiving from the Almighty, and how we can apply it, to its original and ultimate purpose. We shall discern this but imperfectly—we shall make many mistakes, and do our part very ill: miserable apprentice-work it will be at the best; but the Master will direct the single, watchful eye, the careful, industrious hand, meantime; and finally return to finish the work himself, "Polished after the similitude of a palace."

I apprehend the real character of Dedication, is to separate everything from the uses to which it has been sinfully perverted, and devote it to the uses for which it was designed: what is immortal, to God's glory in our immortal bliss—what is temporal, to his glory in our temporal well-being. We are sure there is no discrepancy between them; there is not one good for this world, and another for the world to come: what tends not to happiness in the end, is not real happiness by the way, whatever men may take it for. Is not such the dedication God intends, when He demands of us body, soul, and spirit, a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to Himself? Does he mean that the body is to be wasted by fastings and flagellations, and sleepless night-watches, as if that were all the design of its most exquisite machinery—health, and strength, and beauty, adaptation, and proportion? Does He mean that every exercise of mental power is to be suspended, save that of prayer and abstract contemplation, as if that were the sole purpose of the still finer machinery of the brain, with all its varied faculties—wit, invention, fancy, taste, feeling, memory? There have been at all times some who thought so: perhaps some are thinking so at the very moment of reading this. Nobles have refused their state, heirs their inheritance, and kings their crowns; intellect has disused its influence, and skill its exercise, and wealth its honest occupancy: most truly proving they took what they possessed to be their own, not God's; for we may no more make away with what is another's, than we may purloin and appropriate it to ourselves. To fulfil our stewardship is one thing, to refuse or resign it is another; the easier no doubt, and the safer, if it were permissible: easier to

resign the duty than fulfil it, safer to refuse the trust than incur the usury. So Moses thought, when he intreated the Lord to send by some other hand and fetch his people out: so Elijah thought when he laid him down to sleep under the juniper-tree: and so Jonah, when he fled the Lord's presence, rather than do his errand. Many a deceived and coward heart has thought so—has destroyed the body instead of its sinful lusts and affections, and fled the world instead of its idle pomps and vanities: incased with vows, conventual habiliments, and conventional rules, instead of with the garments of salvation—the armour of light and shield of faith. Are they not thinking so, who, born in different grades of society, and variously gifted by nature and endowed by providence, reduce themselves to a common level and condition, to form a brotherhood apart from all the refinements, and elegancies, and proprieties of life; leaving as it must do, if fully carried out, the industrious artisan and skilful labourer to starve, while pauperism fattens on the spoil? "To use the world as not abusing it," is the Gospel equipoise; very difficult to maintain, in a sinful generation, and with a sinful heart: we feel the difficulty; we want faith for the conflict; and we refuse the using, for fear of the abusing, of God's gifts, as if the one was not as much contrary to his intentions as the other. To carry out those gracious, bountiful intentions, is the wakeful, watchful task of faith and love: we have said something of it in connexion with the obedience of faith. In connexion with our present subject, the sanctification of the soul, we have only to add, "Seek first the kingdom of God," its establishment within us, its extension round us, the increase of its glory, beauty, and excellence in ourselves, and all with-

in our influence; the only important, the only needful. Whatever more be 'added,' adapted to our time-state all earthly and inferior as it is, is given us freely to enjoy; and we have chiefly to be careful that its use and enjoyment does not, directly or indirectly, impede or interfere with those first objects. When tender parents give their children toys to play with after their lessons have been learned, they are used to bid them take care they do not hurt themselves. We are children, and used as children are, to hurt ourselves with our most harmless toys; and, because earthliness and sensuality are the outstanding propensity of the flesh, always in conflict with the spiritual nature; it requires very honest, very faithful, and very watchful hearts, to use without sin what in itself is sinless; with purity, what is pure; with safety, what is safe. For this reason perhaps it is, that so large a proportion of divine instruction is prohibitory; more minute as to what we may not do, than what we may do. In God's own table, for instance, the inculcatory laws are brief and general: almost all that is specific is prohibitory. I think, therefore, that our great care in the dedication of ourselves to God is to avoid sin; the contact, influence, even appearance of sin, with everything that directly or indirectly leads to it, gives it strength and encouragement, or exposes us unnecessarily to its temptations. But there is one thing more. I have suggested that the sole use of time is not to pray—yet it is written that we are to "pray always." I have supposed that the sole use of thought is not divine contemplation, yet it is required that God be in all our thoughts. Scent is diffused throughout the flower, and diffused by it around: flavour pervades the rich juices of the fruit, and gives it all its value; but the

flower is not all perfume, nor the fruit all flavour. Prayer is, to all other uses of time, what the perfume is to the flower, "incense of a sweet-smelling savour." God's sensible presence in our thoughts, is, to all other exercises of the mind, what the flavour is to the fruit, tasteless and valueless without it. Diffused through and pervading all we do, it is this which consecrates our dedicated stuff, and sanctifies it to all lawful uses; as the burning of certain parts of a sacrifice upon the altar of offering, was considered a dedication of the whole to God, making of the remainder meet and wholesome food for the natural appetite of the priest and people. If we could bear this always in mind, it would greatly lessen our difficulties: all that we dedicate, to whatever uses, temporal or spiritual, for time or for eternity, must be also consecrated—consecrated by thanksgiving and prayer, and the abiding sense of the divine presence. When this has not been done—when it cannot be—when it would seem strange to mix up the matter with our previous prayers, or subsequent acknowledgements, and ever-present consciousness of the indwelling Deity, there is every reason to believe that the uses, whatever they may be, are unlawful, and the dedication void. It is the Scripture test, "Seeing he giveth God thanks."

Some Christians, good and pious, yes, and holy people, would close the work of human sanctification thus, at least for this life; expecting nothing from it but election or separation, effected by the Spirit in regeneration; and dedication or consecration, carried out by the Spirit in conversion; leaving the soul inherently, no holier, no better: unchanged as the hewn stone or molten brass with which the temple of the Lord was built: hallowed only like them, in the choosing and the

using, but not in quality or nature changed. I agree with them that the sanctification of the believer has such a sense. God calls his people holy in one sense, when he elects and separates them to himself; in another sense, when he dedicates and secludes them to sacred uses: the first being a putative holiness, existing only in the will of him that does it; as Joshua might select twelve stones from Jordan's banks to build a memorial to the Lord; the second, applicatory; as the selected stones might be built into an altar of offering, and become holy by their use and application. In both these senses, the Scripture calls the whole nation of the Israelites holy, including an Ahab and a Rehoboam: and things as well as people, and places as well as things; though the things thus reputed holy have been polluted and destroyed, and the hallowed places become profane and common; while the many thousands of Israel, separated and consecrated to that extent by God himself, have perished in unrighteousness and unbelief; no essential holiness being wrought in any of them, but only that which was putative and dedicatory, for a purpose and for a season; during the good pleasure of God, as we for his service do separate and consecrate many things for holy uses, which ultimately return into the common stock.

I believe every child of God is in this sense sanctified at once: he is chosen of God and precious, sét apart and accounted a holy thing unto Himself, before any inherent sanctification is wrought in him, or any fruits of holiness appear; in like manner as he is justified and accounted righteous, before any works of righteousness are done in him or by him: reputed holy, because He is holy, to whom we are separate and dedicate; as we

are accounted righteous by imputation of His righteousness to whom we are united. So far, I contend for no progression: the poor sinner still laden with iniquity and guilt, is accounted holy by our Most Holy God, from first to last for his own name's sake. It is written, "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified," as well as "But ye are justified—in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God."

While therefore we refuse the notion of imputed sanctification, as wholly unscriptural, I think there is such a thing as reputed holiness apart from any qualification in the creature. But whereas the soul that is justified in the imputed righteousness of Christ, and taken into union with him, does finally grow into his likeness by that union, and exhibit in himself a reflection of that righteousness, stronger and stronger as he draws closer and closer: so I believe the soul that is first reputed holy by separation and consecration of the Spirit, is progressively sanctified and made holy in itself; meet and fitted, as well as chosen and appropriated, to the master's use: holy as he is holy, pure as he is pure, perfect for he is perfect. The Father who first loves us in his Son alone, finally loves his Son's own image in us: and having first chosen us to be the temples of the Spirit, looks finally with satisfaction on the inwrought beauty of the Spirit's dwelling-place.

Alas, if it be not so, if the imputed righteousness by which we are justified in Christ, is to be followed only by a reputed holiness, by which we are sanctified in the Spirit, we shall come very short of our happiness at last; we shall have but an imputed salvation instead of being saved; a reputed felicity instead of the bliss of heaven. Methinks our blessed substitute in death must

also be our substitute in life: our representative before the judgment-seat, must be our representative before the throne of glory; for however He may hide our sins from judgment, under cover of his righteousness; we cannot stand there, unless He also wash our robes and make them white. We may be pardoned, we may be justified, we may be reconciled and accepted, all vile and worthless sinners as we are; but we cannot be made happy unless we are made holy: not putatively but inherently, not constructively, but intrinsically. It is impossible. This impossibility is no arbritrary thing, determined of Almighty power, but which may be dispensed with by Almighty grace; it is a necessity reaching to Deity itself: guilt and misery cannot be separated; grace cannot make the sinner eternally happy, except by making him spotlessly pure. If it be said that omnipotent grace can do this at once, as well as progressively; we do not doubt it, there are such instances: the soúl transferred from the malefactor's cross to paradise, was purified at once; the death-bed penitent may possibly be so: and children, withdrawn in infancy from this world's untried evils, must be separated from every taint as well as imputation of sin, and made really as well as reputedly holy, without progression, or the intervention of any human means. But in the living saint, however saintly, we perceive and are sure that it is not so; he is not sanctified at once; he is not pure as God is pure, nor holy as God is holy: we see him not perfect in the renewed image of his Lord. If one could be found to say he sees himself so, how little should we believe him; if we should say to any one, we see him so, how little would he believe us. Nevertheless, we hope, we pray, we labour, and we

trust to be progressing towards it, from the first moment of our new birth unto righteousness, to the latest moment of our abiding in the flesh, only to reach the consummation when we leave it: perfect in holiness and happiness together. Are not great part of the Holy Scriptures otherwise without meaning; being equally inapplicable to persons who already are, or who never are to be made holy: incapable of becoming anything but what they are at present? The Epistles, in particular, addressed to the saints as such, abound in exhortations to increasing holiness, persuading us to become something more than, or different to what we are. To the temporal election it has hitherto been said in vain—"Be ye holy, for I am the Lord your God." As a nation, they were never sanctified by the indwelling Spirit: the heart of stone has not yet been taken away, the heart of flesh has not been given them: but we expect it will, for they are still His people: the separation has not been revoked, the reputed holiness has never been reversed: we believe, as we have said before, that the type will be perfected by final restoration and acceptance; and then all Israel shall be sanctified as well as saved. To the spiritual election it is never said in vain, "I am the Lord who sanctifieth."—"The Lord sanctifieth them that are his:" the pledge, the promise, the command are one. It is the Lord's work, but it is worked out by means;—by instruments willing or unwilling, conscious or unconscious. There is nothing in nature, providence or grace, that may not be made use of to advance the work. The wind that wrecks our ships, or blights our harvest; the pain that embitters and consumes our lives; the death that robs our houses, and takes away our loved; the evil as well as good,

the good as well as evil of every passing day; are all the Spirit's agency to this most gracious end: no less than the things more especially appointed thereunto; such as the word of God and prayer—the use of ordinances and Gospel ministrations. Our very sins, sometimes, are made to do execution upon themselves, and by the misery they inflict, to work for their own cure. Even he, even Satan himself, despite himself, and all his efforts to impede our progress, is made to advance it, by the watchful fear his conscious presence excites. But am I wrong in saying, that in this difficult and arduous work, the chief instrument in God's hands, the head labourer under him in every believing regenerate heart, is that heart itself: its honest purposes, its strong desires, its longing efforts and its yearning love? watching for everything, seizing upon everything, giving thanks for everything that may be converted into the aliment of righteousness. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." For this the believer detaches himself from a world whose intercourse destroys, but never feeds the holy appetite: for this he avoids many things in which the world perceives no harm;—in which there would be no harm, but that they hinder and impede our righteous progress: for this he values and pursues, with much sacrifice, perhaps of temporal advantage and convenience, things that the world conceives he might very well dispense with: and so he could, if he had no progress to make: pious associations, spiritual influences and means of grace.

Oh! it is a craving of godly appetite in healthful souls, that cannot be silenced by considerations and calculations, and conveniences of this life: cannot be

stayed by fictitious semblances and ceremonials of a feast, where the holy edibles are none, or forbidden to take, wherever it can find them; without leave of this world's polity. Why! the mere plant, the senseless ash or birch-tree misplanted on a wall, will contort its form and withhold its foliage, and forego all its natural habits, to traverse yards and yards in search of the soil that suits it. Watch the vilest thing that lives; what efforts it makes, what contrivances to grow, and to increase its life and vigour. God's living ones must grow, will grow: they cannot, may not be satisfied without it: nor without any thing He has appointed and made attainable, by which their spiritual life may be invigorated, and their growth in holiness enlarged and quickened. "Forgetting the things that are behind,—stretching forward to the things that are before,"—they may not trifle with anything,—loiter anywhere,—sit down to eat and drink or rise up to play, where their growth will be impeded, and their life-blood chilled.

CHAPTER XI.

IN HIS HOLY ORDINANCES.

It is but a continuation of the same subject: we need scarcely have divided it by so much as the heading of a chapter. Religious ordinances are the specific appointment of God for the sustaining and perfecting of his redeemed, for the conversion and sanctification of those whom He justifies and saves. They cannot justify—they cannot save: they are medicines for the sick, unavailing to the dead: food for the living, but unavailable to the unquickened soul. "Am I a God to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send to me to recover a man of his leprosy?" If the hallowed elements and emblamatic water, the font, the altar, the hassock, or the pulpit, the holy sabbath-day and the most holy Book, might answer for themselves, this would be their language. It is no fault in the ordinance that it is found standing in the temple of God "shewing itself that it is God:" he who so places it, so thinks of it, and so uses it, has made, as idolaters were ever used to do, an idol of God's workmanship, profanely calling upon it to exercise his incommunicable attributes: vainly looking to it as the source and giver of divine life.

But might not God alienate his life-giving power,

so as to commit the exercise of it to vicarious hands or vest it in some second cause? I do not think he could; and I am sure He does not: for then the power of life must either become inherent in the means, so as to be inseparable from it,—or it must be discretionary in it; to be exercised at will; and in either case we make the means a god; endowed with power—to kill and to make alive. It was not so in the typical disease,—the leprosy of old. The priest to whom it was committed to make the leper clean, had no discretionary power to grant or to refuse; nor any means by which to work a cure: all he had was an exact rule by which to judge of the condition of the sufferer, and pronounce a condemnation or a release, according as God's work might appear: a very different operation from the recovery wrought on them of old, who were bidden to go and show themselves to the priest, and were healed as they went, not after they came there: their only business with the priest was to exhibit the cure, and offer for it such things as the law appointed. Such are our means; such are our offerings; means of grace and offerings of acknowledgement: but neither means of salvation, nor sacrifices for sin. The holy Book is sealed; the preached word is a dead letter; the sacraments are ceremonies, the prayers a lifeless form; the sabbath an offence; and all no more than witnesses against us—without the energy of the Spirit, which may or may not, at any given time, be in them. If the new-born soul, alive and justified in Christ, were at once sanctified and meet for heaven, or whenever it shall be so, ordinances were superfluous, having no further application to their own proper uses. The penitent thief:—we are obliged to recur so often to

this one example, because their is but one, of a soul renewed and perfected at once—the penitent thief required no ordinances: no waters of baptism were crossed upon his forehead, no consecrated elements passed between his lips: one penitent confession and one prayer of faith, gave evidence of the new birth, and all was over; the soul was mature for heaven. The still-born babe whose eyes never opened upon this world's light, and the perfected saint, whose eyes are closing on it, have alike no need of ordinances: dispensed with in the one case, and done with in the other, their instrumentality is needless to the purified recovered soul, as the sap of the vine to the ripe and gathered fruit: while to the soul which, since it died in Adam, was never inflated by one breath of life from above, they are useless as that sap is to the severed branch. Whence then is our confusion about this blessed provision for our imperfect state? Why have we prayers for the dead, and unction for the dying—eucharists for the unbelieving, baptisms for the impenitent, and absolutions for the unconverted; incapable alike of being acted upon by them? Or why have we on the other hand, neglected sacraments, cold prayers, and wasted sabbaths, voiceless pulpits and disused bibles, while living souls are checked and stinted in their growth, and weary souls are faint, and hungry souls are famished, for lack of what God has appointed for their sustentation. We err in all ways, and we suffer in all. The process of the error is always pretty much the same. Some Aaron arises, to gather together our pure gold, and fashion it with a graving tool, and build an altar, and proclaim a feast; and cries, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee out of

Egypt:" these forms and ordinances alone can save. And thereupon another messenger comes—a messenger of God's displeasure, to seize upon the profaned, polluted treasure; grinds it to powder, strews it upon the water, makes us to drink of it; and all is lost. It has been so with churches, with sacraments, with priesthoods, with God's appointed ordinances of whatever kind, the most sacred, the most useful, the most blessed: first deified and exalted in the place of God: then trodden under foot or turned to poison.

We turn with delight from our own mischiefs and mistakes, to our Father's abundant wisdom in this provision for our great necessities: so suitable to our wants, so adapted to our nature, so sufficient, and yet not more, to our entire recovery.

The Holy Bible—may we never name anything before it, or put anything in competition with it; even to the Bible, Jehovah has not committed a saving, a life-giving power; or myriads of readers had not read in vain: but He has committed to it everything beside; even his whole mind and purpose towards the sons of men; all that it behoves us to learn of the unknown past, the unseen present, and the inscrutable future. It is his word, his mind, his will—invested as such with many of his attributes. Its truth, its certainty, its infallibility are his own: its wisdom, its authority, its faithfulness are his: it is, what man upon his peril may not make, but what Himself has graciously made and put into our hands, a representation and transcript of Himself; not in painted wood or sculptured stone, submitted to the perception of the senses, of our inferior faculties; but in living, meaning words, the medium of communication with our higher faculties, our moral and

intellectual perceptions. Woe be to the idolatrous imitator that shall pretend to make us such another representation of Deity, and bid us reverence it as of like authority. None ever had a right to make even God's written image but himself. I take for granted the plenary inspiration of Scripture; because, if it be doubted, this is no place to prove it: I speak of the Bible, as I think of it, as the word of God, by direct inspiration of the Holy Ghost: not subjected to erring and imperfect instruments, who might miscolour the true drawing. May we bow down to it, and worship it? No, for it is not God; though, indeed, if we might turn idolators at all, the sacred book should have the preference: the nearest thing to vicegerency on earth. But the Bible is not our Saviour: it is but a representation—a picture of his own drawing. We might bind it for a sign upon our hand, and a frontlet between our eyes: we might write it on the door-posts of our houses and the borders of our garments, and perish everlastingly. Devils, who hate the Bible, acknowledge its authority; and sinners, who have hated it scarcely less, have died confessing it. There is no power vested in the book to save or give us life from the dead. But it is the most precious, the most potent of God's appointed means, to convert, to enlighten, to sustain, and mature the soul: we may trust it, we may love it, feed upon it, commit ourselves wholly to its guidance, and rest ourselves entirely on its truth. I have said, we may, but I mean we must; for it contains all we know or ever shall know of the mind of God, until He who *is* God shall come again to tell us more, and supersede, perhaps, all intermediaries between himself and man—all ordinances, appointed helps of imperfection. "When they

shall no more teach each other, saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know him from the least to the greatest." Perhaps the Bible will not be wanted then: I cannot tell, but now! what good would our lives do us without it? most blessed depository of all that we have need of: through which, more than by any other means, God hold communication with us: speaks to us, answers us, and acts upon our minds. For, when the Spirit speaks through the sacred text to the believing heart, more is conveyed than instruction in the Gospel. The Scriptures are not simply a declaration of the truth; this they are always, whether believed or not: and will be proved to be in the condemnation of many, to whose hearts the Spirit never brought them home; but when His power is in them, they work as well as teach: they influence, persuade, impower, to what they certify; "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." Little indeed do they know the value of this fathomless mine of good, who read the Bible *only* for information,—only to learn the way of salvation; the doctrines of the Gospel, and the requirements of the law. Revelation is the primary intent, but it is not all. It is not merely written there, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest," as directions may be written on a way-post, or promises on deeds of parchment. Power is often given to the words to convey the rest proposed, and allay the weariness, and make the burthen lighter.

How often has the doubting soul become convinced in the reading of passages, perused with indifference a thousand times before. How continually is the seeking soul comforted, enlightened, strengthened—not in the discovery of something never heard before, but in the repernsal of the most familiar passages. That this hap-

pens at one time, and not at another,—takes effect on one person, and not on all, while the word remains the same, and the truth of it the same,—is a plain evidence that this most precious book, all gracious and powerful as it is, is only an instrument to be used at will; efficient to nothing certainly, and at all times; efficient never in itself; divine powers so presumptuously claimed by mere human agents; so profanely attributed to ordinances far inferior in value and authority to this: because this, our most precious depository of grace, is the only ordinance unmixed with fallible and imperfect agency. Meantime, this very uncertainty is full of sweet encouragement to longing souls; to sinful, suffering souls; to the penitent and believing, the contrite and broken-hearted: to read, and read again, and still to read the more, the more they find, or the more they delay to find the thing they want. The light that was not in it yesterday will be there to-day: the comfort we find not now, will be in it presently: the same text that one day is a sword that strikes us through, is next day the very balm that heals the wound. It has been remarked, perhaps, with truth, that there is enough in some single chapters to make known the way of salvation: but the abundance of the provision is designed for much more than this: the food of our appetite, the medicine of our sickness, the lamp of our darkness, the sunlight of our days, our staff, our paraclete, our helm, our compass, all that a traveller wants upon the way. There is something in the Bible provided for every exigency, adapted to every circumstance in which the believer finds himself: even to his changing tastes, and feelings, and desires, as he progresses heavenward: conforming itself to all differences of natural character, of age or

intelligence, as well as spiritual growth; there seems, as it were, an appropriation to every one, as well as a sufficiency for everything; to sanctify and lead every living soul to glory.

PRAYER:—next in importance as a means of grace, yet second, because all powerful and prevailing as it is, it is but our intercourse with God, while the Bible is his with us;—Prayer is a temporal ordinance likewise: a help for our imperfections; an instrument of deity adapted to our time-state. For whatever our intercourse with God may be, in holiness and happiness complete, we generally suppose that prayer is not in heaven. Not differing in its nature from other ordinances, we cannot think without wonder upon its great mysterious power: with the same liability alas! to make gods and saviours of our prayers, as of every other means of grace. We need not refer for proof of this to the grosser estimate of the value of aves and paternosters, counted in current coin; prayers made the price of salvation, but paid for in gold and silver: themselves the costlier purchase of the two. Short of so monstrous a fiction, we are always in danger of attaching a saving value to our prayers, as if they were something God would accept in diminution of his claim upon us, equivalents for debt incurred by sin. It is an insiduous danger, because it is susceptible of so many shades of persuasion, almost to unconsciousness that we are thinking so. As there were some of old who prayed in the corners of the streets, there are some now who pray in sacred edifices only to be seen of men;—because it is decent—because it is the custom—because it is a good example to go to church, and so ordered by the legislature. There are others, not a few, who go

thither only to be seen of God, and acquit themselves of a duty they are afraid to neglect, or entitle themselves to something in return: not of grace, but of debt. And are there not dishonest hearts; that "for a pretence" make prayers—to excuse themselves from something they like less than daily services, or nightly orisons: renunciation of their sins, detachment from the world and humble dependence on the cross of Christ? Yes—and there are honest hearts, that, almost unconscious of what they are about, make a Saviour of prayer, by despairing of salvation because they cannot pray worthily; because their prayers are so mixed up with earthliness and sin, they cannot make them acceptable to a holy God. There is no way of overrating the efficacy of prayer—for I am persuaded the most devout believer underrates it—except by mistaking the source and nature of its efficiency. Perhaps we are naturally led to think of prayer as a provision God has made for himself, rather than for us; a provision for his service, rather than for our benefit: something which has intrinsic power to act on Deity, instead of being a mere instrument through which He acts on us: as through the word and other means. Yet we cannot suppose our prayers convey information—"He knoweth what we have need of before we ask"—the voiceless desires of the soul are as intelligible to him as the loud orison. We may not suppose they work any change in the divine mind and will—whose attribute is unchangeableness: "He said this to prove them—for He himself knew what he would do." Beside: we believe that every prayer accepted of the Father, is an emotion of the Holy Spirit: and whereas the Father knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, and interces-

sion for the saints is made according to his will, it would appear that, being both the asker and the giver, the giver of the petition as well as of the grant, the intercommunication might be dispensed with. On the part of the Deity we may be assured it might: it is a scheme, a contrivance, if I may so speak, intended and adapted solely to ourselves: not to bring his willing ear and abundant mercies down to us, but to raise our unwilling hearts and slow desires up to him. If it is so, that there can be no prayer, because there is no suffering or want, in heaven, since abundant benefits are continually received and enjoyed there, it must be because Almighty God there gives what He will give, and does what He will do without invocation; as He might if it pleased him, here. In this case it would appear that the intervention of prayer is a consequence of man's fallen state, introduced as a means of restoration and recovery. We may cease to wonder then, and puzzle and distress ourselves, that the effects of prayer are represented to us in Scripture in language so purely human, that we see not how it can possibly apply to Deity: wherein it is said to hinder him; to dissuade him, to delay, to importune, to weary him: to change his purposes, or move him to repentance. Of this medium, which sovereign wisdom has interposed between the Creator and his fallen creation, we see the side only that is turned towards ourselves, not that which is turned to him: and He most graciously describes it as we see it, not as it is beholden by himself: or how could we otherwise understand him? Let us not cavil, but believe: no easy task: for it is that to which our faith is very slow. I doubt if any of us believe to the full extent the value of prayer; or exercise

its power to the utmost that we might; or receive from above, all that is promised, and would be granted to it. For let us call to mind once more, what cannot be recalled too often, that while all is of God, prayer and its effects pertain to that part of our salvation, wherein we are free agents, not machines; consenting or resisting; striving, opposing, grieving, too often, instead of yielding to the Spirit's impulsion towards the throne of grace. Lest we should be discouraged, and because our heavenly Father knew we should be discouraged, by the mysterious character of this holy ordinance, promises, assurances, examples, evidences of every possible kind, the most exalted and appalling, the most homely and familiar, have been multiplied throughout the Bible in a very remarkable manner. There is scarcely any variety of time, or circumstance, or occasion, in which the Christian finds himself, but he may find in the Bible a similar case, in which believing prayer is not only said to be, but shewn to have been effectual. From the terrible interferences which prophets of old were moved by the Spirit to ask, to the deep yearnings of domestic love, or individual griefs and wishes; from Ajalon and the valley of Rimmon, to the sick chamber of the king's house at Jerusalem; from the terrific answers of Mount Carmel, before assembled multitudes, to the dialogue between two at the well in Mesopotamia; every possible exemplification is added to assurance of the inscrutable power and prevalence of prayer. Something of the mysterious use of this ordinance seems to disclose itself in this contemplation: for how without its intervention should we have known, divined, conceived, the tender sympathy, the indulgent love, the watchful, constant, and minute

attention of the heavenly Father to the least cares and feelings and desires of his children? He might have been, and would have been to us all that He is now: but we could not have known it, or perceived his goodness as we see it now in his attention to our prayers. Surely if there be within us any germ of spiritual life; any emotion of faith or love, or hope or confidence, the discovery made of his goodness in the exercise of prayer, must bring it forth, and strengthen and mature it. The Lord might have given Hannah a son without her prayers: she would have acknowledged the blessing as his gift under any circumstances: but she would not have called his name Samuel: she would not perhaps have lent him to the Lord as long as he lived. Is there a true Christian living who has not made similar proof of the exquisite value, and sanctified possession of something ostensibly given in answer to believing prayer?

We have given examples; but if we should produce the statements of Scripture with respect to prayer, we must quote the whole volume. More comprehensive they could not be; more minute they could not be: so imperative, as a command, so unrestricted as a privilege; so unlimited as a promise. "In all things." "At all times." "Every where." "With all perseverance." "Without fear or doubting." "Whatsoever ye have need of." This is New-Testament language—Gospel language; so full, so free, so unconditional and persuasive: divested, as all things in the Gospel are, of the more signal and startling features of divine interference in the older time: but not less real, nor less surely realized in actual demonstration to the believing. We know as well as Elijah or Hezekiah did, what has been done unto us according to

our prayers: most of us—all of us, perhaps, might know it a good deal better than they did, if we were more faithful, more observing; because since the veil was rent in twain, and the Holy of Holies was laid open, we have a much nearer view than ever they of old had, of what transpires before the mercy-seat.

I am strongly persuaded that those Christians are in error, who abstain from presenting their earthly desires before the Lord, under the impression that as He only knows what is good for us, and will choose better than we can for ourselves, it is presumptuous, or too venturesome at least, to ask any thing of this world for ourselves. It is a judgment quite contrary to the language of Holy Writ; and I think too, it is opposed to the paternal character of God's government. A father, while he grants nothing to a child's solicitation that will hurt him, never wishes to repress the disclosure of his desires and feelings, the opening of all his heart in artless confidence before him. Our earthly parents would not love the suspicious cold reserve that feared to expose itself to contradiction or refusal. I believe the permission is intended literally, that bids us "in every thing to make our requests known to God;" in the least thing, the most worthless thing: if it be worth a wish, it is worth a prayer: if it be worth having, it is worth asking. Is it for such poor children of the earth as we are, to suppose that God's earthly gifts are not worth having—worth desiring? We know the case is not so; and therefore they are fit subjects for prayer. As to our ignorance of what is good for us, and what is not, prayer is not designed for the information or guidance of Him who hears it, and knows full well without it, both His own mind and ours: but He has appointed

prayer and answers prayer, and we may inquire no farther. The only distinction between our spiritual and temporal wants appears to me to be, that the one being promised without reservation, because always good, should be asked without reservation under certainty of acceptance; the other, being promised contingently, because not always good, should be asked with a like reservation—if they are good for us. We may well trust our Father in heaven with this: He will not grant us the egg or the fish we set our ignorant fancy on, if He knows it will turn out a scorpion or a serpent when we get it; but He would have us leave this to him in prayer, not without it. If there are persons of an opposite mind, who because of the unlimited promises to faith, affect to expect absolutely what is only promised contingently, we have said enough elsewhere about the exercise of faith without a promise; it would be time indeed for such to cease all petitions of an earthly kind, lest their faith bring down curses instead of blessings; very rash it would certainly be for ignorance to ask any thing in this world that *must* follow the very letter of the petition. Under such an impression, we must confine our prayers to spiritual things: but such is not the language of Holy Writ. In "all things"—temporal and spiritual, prayer is the channel through which blessings flow; and they ever flow in some proportion to it, to its perseverance, its fervency, but most of all, its faith. It is there we fail oftenest. It is easy to pray fervently, when we fervently desire; perseveringly, when we do not like to take a denial: but not so to pray believing that we have the things we ask. We generally feel ourselves no nearer to our wishes when we have done, than be-

fore we essayed to pray: we go on our way almost forgetting that we have prayed, and not expecting any thing will come of it. Mark the hungry importunate beggar, what he does: he asks gently at first, but increases his solicitation the more we disregard him: if we turn away, he runs after us: if we say no, he does not believe us: if we bid him begone, he recedes backwards, watching our hands till we are out of sight, in expectation that we may change our mind. We should take him for a strange petitioner, who having asked an alms, or presented a petition, should go indifferently about other business, not even looking back to see what we would do. Creatures of time, we make too much count of time; count slackness as God does not count slackness: we grow weary of waiting, and before the answer comes, have given up all hope and expectation of a blessing: and when it comes, forget very often, or disregard what connexion there may be between the blessing of to-day, and the prayer of bygone years. This lessens our perception of the actual prevalence of prayer reducing almost to a matter of faith, what might otherwise be a matter of actual observation; and will be so, when from the windows of our mansion above, the emancipated spirit shall look out upon the way it came; and see all things in the order in which they came to pass; and how, and why; without the time and space that bars the continuity of our earthly vision. Meanwhile that it must be so much a matter of faith, we may do a great deal to strengthen it, by watchful, waiting, patient observation. Never for one moment let us attach the idea of presumption, as the unbelieving world does, to either the expectation or reception of any thing as an answer to prayer. There is

scarce any feature in which the children of God and the children of this world exhibit so marked a difference; the latter will consent, sometimes, in moments of public danger or calamity, to join in prayer for the interposition of God; but when the danger is past, they will cry presumption, fanaticism, anything, at the bare suggestion that the blessing when it comes, was achieved by prayer; that God averted the calamity at the solicitations of his people. The child of God does believe, he cannot too much believe, he never does enough believe, the connection between the petition and the grant. There may be modes of expression about it, particularly in matters of private concernment, ill-timed, misplaced expression of right feelings, that are in very bad taste to say the least, and more calculated to justify than remove prejudice. This may be of that kind of faith which it is sometimes better to have to ourselves before God; but we would not have Christians discourage in themselves this most precious assurance and expectation, so dear to every believing heart, because others make too much parade and talk about it; a harmless extravagance, if it had not such an effect; for God takes little account, I apprehend, of the honest mind's inelegance and incaution.

The assurance, the expectation, is most dear, most precious; if we could discover it no otherwise, we might learn the use and wisdom of this ordinance, by experience of its blessedness. Let not the distressed and downcast spirit start away from this proposition, at thought of their own broken, miserable, worthless, nay, even unwilling efforts to join in, or produce a form of prayer. Praying is one thing, saying prayers another. Many a prayer is well said by hearts that do not pray;

many a heart prays when it can say no prayer. There is one abroad upon the earth, who knows good prayers from bad ones better than those that make them; and the better they are, the more he tries to thwart and trouble them, by evil thoughts injected, attention idly diverted, darkness suddenly thrown in between us and the object of our worship. Satan does not care to stay the fluent tongue, nor even the eloquent, impressive tongue, with half the earnestness with which he seeks to arrest the broken heart's wordless sigh, the spirit's unutterable groan. Happy indeed are they, who out of houses of prayer and forms of prayer, and stated meetings, hours and opportunities, can make, what they are intended for, helps, occasions, incentives to pray; we cannot value them too much or use them too often, if that be the result. "Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst." But it is not always then or there the most effectual fervent prayer is offered. There is a temple—open day and night—where the Spirit dwells, not visits; where Jesus abides with us, not comes to meet us. It has no forms, no hours, no hallowed days or seasons set apart: there burns the lamp of heaven in it continually, the Holy Spirit's fire; there smokes in it always the sweet incense of Jesu's spotless merits: at all times ready, at all times waiting for the in-turned thought. A single aspiration thence escaping, is prayer the purest sinful souls can breathe, and makes its way through all impediment of surrounding things, all atmosphere of indwelling or out-dwelling sin: the hurry of business, or the strife of tongues; the mockery of men or the pursuit of devils; nothing prevails to spoil it or to stop it. Not wrath or justice itself can bar the

gate of heaven so closely, but such a prayer will force its way into the ear of the Lord God of Sabaoth, though it should be a publican's first cry, a Magdalen's first tear, a criminal's last breath, or even a wicked Ahab's only prayer. In what manner an inspiring Spirit and a mediating Saviour can affect the prayers of unregenerate nature, I do not determine; some persons are very contentious against the possibility of it; but if there is evidence, and there is, of the prayers of an ungodly man prevailing to any extent with the Father, there must be some manner in which they are made prevalent by the Spirit and the Son; for there is no disunity of operation in the Holy Trinity, that the Father should receive what the Holy Ghost cannot inspire, nor the Son present.

THE SABBATH—do not our hearts warm within us as we proceed, in grateful admiration of the wisdom and goodness that has provided all? I speak of the Sabbath now as a temporal ordinance and appointed means of grace; but it has every evidence of being something more. It stands in the table of the moral law: the law immutable of right and wrong; and it appears also among the very few known laws of paradise; of man's innocence, as if the light and blissful occupations of his Eden, were in some manner to be suspended or changed on the day which the Creator blessed and sanctified, to the commemoration of his own rest. After the fall, God made it to be a sign,—the sign—the peculiar and perpetual sign, of the covenant of reconciliation between Himself and his redeemed, by the giving of which He acknowledged them his people, and by the keeping of which they acknowledged Him their God: "A sign between me and you that ye may know that I am the Lord your God."

To suppose the obligation of the holy day weakened while there remains a ransomed sinner upon earth, appears quite impossible; whatever may become of it hereafter, in that "long keeping of a Sabbath" (margin) which remaineth for the people of God: wherein it would appear that they can need no suspension of their work of praise. An abrogation of the Sabbath, so long as the sentence of labour remains upon an earth accursed, is never alluded to in Scripture but as a threat, a punishment; the strongest token of divine displeasure: a withdrawal of the first best pledge of reconciliation between God and man, not likely to have been inflicted by the gospel of peace. That the typical character of the Sabbath has past away does not affect it as an ordinance of grace. Things were sometimes originated on purpose to be types; the ceremonial law for instance; and passed away with their typical intention. But in many cases it was otherwise: things already existing, were appointed to be types; and when the typical intent expired, remained what they were before; thus the Sabbath, of which we are sure that it existed before the typical dispensation, and therefore could not end with it, though its figurative character might. It was commemorative before; and it is commemorative now; it was a blessing, a pledge, a bond, a sign of love, and peace, and unity before, between Almighty God and the creatures of his grace; it is all these now; and if because the figurative ritual is totally annulled, we no longer consider the holy day a type of heaven, it has but undergone the true Gospel change—the substance for the shadow—and instead of the figure become the foretaste, and beginning of heaven, in the hearts of them that love it. A change of the day from

creation's resting-place, to the finishing of redemption's harder labours, is also analogous to every thing in the Gospel; which loves to veil the ruins of the lost, behind the growing beauty of the renewed: and would have us forget on this one blest day in seven, the sad story of the first beautiful, soon spoiled creation, to think only of the new heavens and new earth achieved in prospect when Jesus rose triumphant from the grave. The change makes no difference in the law of sanctification, as a separation and devotion of every seventh day, a seventh part of time to be holy unto the Lord. We used the Sabbath as an example of the general nature of sanctification, comprising separation and dedication: we might recal the general view of sanctification to illustrate the uses of the hallowed day. Some uneasy doubts, perhaps, of honest minds, might be relieved, and the laxity of careless ones reproved, by keeping in mind the purpose of the sabbath; that the day is not separated to weariness and waste, but to the Lord; not to gloominess and privation, but to high and holy entertainment. It is essentially a feast day, not a fast: the feast of the hungry soul, the banquet of the thirsty soul; the rest-day of the faint and weary sojourner of time; the alms-day of the poor and needy pilgrims of the earth; it is the high day of Christ's kingdom throughout the world, and blessed foretaste of his reign to come. Whatever may promote the growth, interest, and power, the present enjoyment or ultimate glory of that kingdom, is, I believe, a consecration of the Lord's day within the spiritual meaning of the law: whatever impedes, obscures, pollutes or secularizes these high intents and aims, is a desecration, whether the letter of a prohibition can be found or not. It is the Lord's Day, and

therefore it is his people's day: not taken from them, but given to them; secluded for them; for their best interests and chief joy; the maintenance and increase of their new being. It is taken from the natural life, so largely incroaching on all other days, and granted to the spiritual life, necessity alone excepted. In the mind of Christ whatever occupation of our Sabbath hours may promote the spiritual good of the least of his brethren, "One of these little ones that believe in me," is a dedication of it to himself. "Six days shall work be done; but the seventh is the day of rest—a holy convocation. Ye shall do no work—it is the Sabbath of the Lord." The principle is broad and comprehensive; the letter of the law confines itself to prohibitions, to telling us what we may *not* do: with the wonted freedom of the blessed service, leaving to the full exercise of faith and love the application of the ordinance, varying as it must with age and character, means and opportunities. That some will turn this freedom into lasciviousness, and because they are left to judge of the religious occupations that may suit them best, will pretend that after having attended certain church services, they can meditate, and pray, and serve in their hearts, while pursuing their ordinary occupations, was foreseen and provided for: God knew that they would say this, in the pride, if not duplicity of their hearts; and therefore while he left the sacred uses free, He made the prohibition absolute; unconditional; without any exercise of choice or judgment. "Thou shalt not do any work:" any secular work: any thing beyond necessity for the life from which the day has been separated, to the detriment or privation of the life to which it has been dedicated: neither shalt thou cause any such work to be done for

thy service, nor permit it within the limit of thy controul: for in this also, the Lord is the representative of his people: whatever interrupts, embitters, or unsanctifies another's day of rest, is a pollution of His Sabbath: "Ye did it unto me." The blessed Jesus did with this, as with every other portion of the moral law;—he made it at once more stringent and more free; more spiritual; more exalted; a law of love instead of fear; inscribed in hearts of flesh instead of tables of stone: He took away its terrors, its rigidity, its temporal punishments, and ceremonial burthens. I do not say the Christian Sabbath is to be made like the Jewish: I do not think it is: but it is as like as every other law the Gospel has confirmed: the curse and the bondage taken away, and all the blessedness of obedience left: the spirit substituted for the letter: the willing service of a fervent heart, for the cold exactness of legal observation. The Jew who might not light a fire on the Sabbath-day, or burn a candle in his dwelling on the Sabbath-night, and was subject to a painful death for the gathering of a few sticks, was kept indeed under bondage to the law; a heavy yoke, until the Gospel came; until He came, who made known what this meaneth—"I will have mercy and not sacrifice"—and put to shame his adversaries, by practical exhibition of the real use and intention of the Sabbath: to loose the sons and daughters of Abraham from the bond of Satan, and open to the light the eyes that sin had closed. Let us go and do likewise: and to the utmost our efforts may avail, make us every whit whole on the Sabbath day; by procuring for ourselves, by communicating to others, every manner of spiritual help; in prayer, in preaching, in reading, in teaching, in religious intercourse and private meditation on the things of God.

Every honest heart distract with mundane duties, borne back with week-day cares, feels the amazing wisdom of this ordinance of refreshment and recovery: this blessed permission to forget the curse, with all its attendant toils, and feast again, for this one day in seven, on the unguarded tree of life.

PREACHING is an ordinance so peculiarly blessed of God to the conversion of the soul: preparing it, at one time, by the terrors of the law, for the reception of the Gospel; conveying to it at other times, the persuasive words of reconciliation: tilling the ground for the incoming seed. Then scattering that precious seed abroad with free and plenteous hand, not knowing which shall prosper, this or that: and then returning again and again on the never-ended mission, to weed, to water, to nourish and mature. There is no slumberer so stupified in sin, but the preached Gospel calls out to him "Awake:" No wandering prodigal so far astray, but the preacher's voice cries after him "Return." Is there a sainted soul so near to God, so true to the Beloved, that it does not need, and does not love, to hear His blessed message repeated; "Abide in me, and I will abide in you?" "If ye love me, keep my commandments?" It is the fashion of some to decry preaching, as superfluous: prayers and the Bible being sufficient without it. No doubt they are sufficient—and superfluous too: for the Spirit is sufficient without either. But who dares say that God has provided in waste? What hungering soul yet unfilled, what sick man yet unhealed, dares say there is too much medicine, too much food? It is no healthful appetite, no cured disease, that holds such language, while sin and the flesh remain: it is the rebellion of proud minds, or

the wilfulness of childish minds, resisting the physician's prescription, the Father's wise provision;—by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. If prayer be the means to bring his mercy forth, preaching is the messenger by whom He sends it; if the one be the hand that knocks at heaven's gate, the other is the hand most commonly that opens it. We cannot exalt one ordinance by the depreciation of another: each one has not only a general but a specific purpose in the economy of grace; something distinctive in its design and application to our manifold occasions. That prayer and preaching should be placed in competion, seems peculiarly unreasonable: because their offices are more than ordinarily distinct. God's messenger the one—our messenger the other: the one the sun-beam, alighting on our souls: the other the radiance of indwelling fire. Let him only who is sure he is not wanting in the one, be bold enough to neglect the vivifying influence of the other. It is the conceit of unparalleled folly to make antagonists of them: as if those who love the house of public prayer, should care little for the preaching of the Gospel in it: and those who set much value upon the latter ordinance, should depreciate the value and efficacy of social worship. There is no divine authority for so much as a preference between them: whatever we may in our own judgment assume of their respective value,—for the same God who ordained the one ordained the other, and has not told us which is best. As an evidence of conversion, the one is all, the other nothing: because it is that which cometh out of a man, not that which entereth into him, that proves his state of mind: but as a means of conversion the value is reversed: the

heart is acted upon from without; and together with the written word, of which indeed it is but the poor handmaid, looking to the eyes of its master, and the hands of its mistress, preaching is the especially appointed means. It seems more plausible to put these two in competition which are to the same end, and say we want no preaching where the Scriptures are read: and if they must be rivals, let the poor fallible imperfect organ be for ever silent before the unerring Word of inspiration. But why should man be more wise than his Maker. God has appointed preachers, prophets, apostles, ministers,—from the very earliest periods to the latest issue of his Word: his especial primary commission to them is "to preach"—the woe is upon them if they "preach not"—the blessing is with them to the end if they preach faithfully: for once that the administration of ordinances is mentioned, preaching is many times alluded to. I do not think there is anywhere a command to baptize that is not accompanied with a command to preach: I do not think there is an example of the Apostles assembling the church together for prayer, without preaching to them. We have no desire to set the ordinance above other means of grace: the instruments are so weak, so defective, so very human we might scarcely have anticipated its efficiency. But may it not be for that very reason that God makes most potent use of it? Is it not his method to take the foolish things to confound the wise,—the weak to defeat the strong? Has He not always chosen the least to be the greatest, the most incompetent, to do the most important work; the emptiest vessel to hold the choicest treasure; on purpose to secure all the glory to himself, and prove the agent

nothing? Whatever his purpose in it be, the fact is indisputable: it is by the preaching of the cross, more than any other means, the most ostensible effect is produced upon the kingdom of darkness, the most gracious revivals effected in the kingdom of grace: pioneer sometimes to the written word, to break the path before it, and make way for its supremacy: entering sometimes into its labours, to take advantage of already received impressions: subservient to it always, subjected to it always, and only justified as it is found in accordance with it.

A MINISTRY, ambassadors for Christ to us—separated, consecrated and set apart for holy uses, is so manifestly an ordinance of God from the beginning, that however much men may differ as to the manner of it, it may well surprise us, that a people, a devout and pious people, should be found to set aside the ministerial office altogether. Owning no sympathy with those who think but one form of ordination valid, or any ordination valid at all, without the calling of God and induction of the Holy Ghost, to make an approved minister of Jesus Christ; it seems to me irreconcileable, with all Scriptural authority, all custom in the Church, and all common sense and feeling of mankind, that no act of consecration should be supposed necessary to so hallowed a purpose; so that all, or any of us may take it upon ourselves, or receive and exercise it without detachment from secular occupation: without even that reputed and official sanctification, which is in the power of man to give, waiting upon the anointing of the Spirit for the rest. When God made a ministry for holy things in the only nation whose polity emanated for himself, He separated from among the people a whole tribe, that even by descent or relation-

ship, there should be no admixture between the sacred offices of the temple, and the common interests of life. The sons of Levi had no lands to till, no cattle to buy and sell, no portion among their brethren to gain or lose in this world's toil and strife. The Lord their God was the portion of their inheritance, and their worldly provision was of the offerings of his house; the supplies demanded for his service; not of benevolence, but of right: as much of right to the one tribe as the land divided by lot to the other eleven. If it be not a precedent, binding on a Christian country, as it is certainly not a divine enactment to be exactly followed under the Gospel, when all these older things have passed, it is at least an example, drawn from the only national polity we know to be of God. We have examples also of similar separation under the Gospel: first by the Son of God, who when he selected his own ministry, withdrew them from their fishing-nets and customs, and sent them forth upon his holy mission, qualified at once by miraculous gifts and powers: by the Holy Ghost afterwards, who directed the lot that fell upon Matthias, and said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul to the work whereunto I have called them:" and made them also meet and willing to their blessed work. This human selection cannot: but the Spirit can do it still; and still He does it where he listeth: we hear the sound—we know not whence—we know not whither: because it is now of faith and not of sight—of indwelling energy instead of sensible manifestations: and we can discern the Spirit's movement only by the fruits. Of these fruits we are to judge, and must judge: for so only can we try the spirits whether they be of God. All that man can do, he

must do, in the selection of God's ministry. We shall make mistakes where he makes none; but in the exercise of faith and such judgment as we have, should Christians do otherwise than God has always done? "Separate them unto the Gospel"—sanctify them to his service; and provide that they may live of the altar where they serve? "Offer them for an offering," that they be wholly given unto him, and esteem them very highly for their work's sake?" I need not dwell upon the spiritual benefits resulting to ourselves; the suitability, the beneficence, of this institution. We know it, because we feel it: our hearts incline to it: we seem almost naturally to love it, to cling to it, to expect every spiritual blessing from it. Satan has oftener succeeded, I believe, in persuading us to expect too much from an earthly vessel, hallowed though it may be by the Spirit's choice; to repose too much upon an arm of flesh, nerved though it may be by the Spirit's power; than to undervalue and contemn their ministrations. Nothing but unfitness for the holy office, or unwarranted assumption in it, will ever detach the hearts of the community from them that duly administer in holy things, until those hearts have been atheistically or politically denaturalized: and even then, a disowned reverence often outlives the love, and vice itself would rather avoid than brave, the presence of a minister of God.

SACRAMENTS, as our Church describes them, beside being, like other ordinances, signs of grace and God's good will towards us, and like them ordained to work invisibly in us for the quickening and strengthening of our faith: are distinguished from other ordinances and constituted sacraments, by having a visible sign or ceremony prescribed by God. If there are, as I

think, substitutes under the Gospel, for the type of the Old Testament, such should by analogy be their distinctive character: the indispensable characteristic of a true type being, that it should be made such by God himself: men might not by any means constitute or devise a typical figure for themselves. In the work of recovery, the sanctification of a peculiar people to the Lord, the Sacraments have a very marked and distinguished character: in that they are badges and tokens of Christian men's profession; witnesses on both sides: an exchange, as it were, of pledges: our seal as well as God's, to the covenant of grace. Other ordinances testify to God's reconciliation with us: we hear it in preaching; we read it in the Word; we ask it in prayer: we enjoy it in the sabbath: the Sacraments testify at the same time to our reconciliation with Him; our actual entrance into and acceptance of the covenant. Hence while the Word addresses itself to all, while preaching proclaims the day of grace to all; while prayer is the privilege, and the sabbath the gracious opportunity of all: the Sacraments are valid only to the elect of God,—the called according to his promise: because it is they only who duly accept and reciprocate the tokens of amity and peace set forth in them; and honestly set their seal to the compact that God shall be their God, and they will be his people. It is they only who faithfully perform their part in that interchange of troth, which alone gives efficacy to the outward and visible sign. Why are faith and repentance required of them who come to be baptized? Because faith and repentance are the first evidences of the new life, without which no one has a right to partake of that Sacrament, neither can derive any inward bene-

fit from it. Why are they who come to the Lord's Supper, and every time they come, required to examine themselves anew, whether their repentance is true, their purpose stedfast, their faith lively, and their remembrance thankful, of his death in whom they live? Because these are growing evidences of the new life, by which we must re-assure ourselves that we are indeed competent partakers of the spiritual benefits of this Sacrament. Do we mean to say, that because the Sacramental ordinances are restricted to the household of faith, no one is to present himself at the table who does not certainly *know* himself to be a living member of Christ; and no one to be received at the font, whom we do not certainly *know* to be regenerate and born of the Holy Ghost? No. Our's is but the external administration,—the outward and visible sign; done in faith, and the exercise of the best judgment we have, upon the state of the recipient, according to rules given us whereby to know the living from the dead—the leprous from the clean. If the yearning of spiritual desire, the stirrings of a contrite spirit, the germinating trust in a crucified Redeemer, give token of a soul no longer dead in trespasses and sins, we may go with that soul in faith and hope, though short of assured confidence, to the Lord's table, and try if it may feed, if it can feed upon the invisible manna represented there; as one might put food into a seemingly drowned man's mouth, to try if life be in him, that he can swallow. If the Scriptures give us reason to believe that every child of Adam is redeemed by Christ from the original condemnation, and, without sin actually committed, will be found alive in Him, we may take the unconscious babe to the font, in faith and hope,

though short of certainty again, to try if it may be, that this child is such a one. "If the Son of peace be there, the blessing shall abide; if not, it shall return on thine own head." It is an act of obedience, a work of faith, always in that character acceptable to Him who ordained the rite. If we are mistaken in the state of the recipient, we place neither ourselves nor others in a worse condition than before. Unconscious, unconsenting baptism can create no responsibilities that do not exist without it: whereas in the Lord's Supper, as well as in adult Baptism, or Confirmation, which I take to be virtually the same thing, we suppose at least an honest wish and purpose, that the recipient incur not the added guilt of broken vows, the increased responsibility of a false profession: we recommend no one to venture upon either ordinance, who is not minded to forsake sin, and believe the promises of God made to him in those Sacraments. The internal administration—the inward and spiritual grace, is wholly with the Lord. When by the hand of Moses He administered to the multitudes of Israel the baptism of the Red Sea, He knew who they were that would perish in the wilderness. When by his own hand He administered to the twelve the first Communion of his body and blood, He knew who it was among them that did not believe. In the first He found not the new birth of the Spirit: to the other He gave not his body and blood to eat: the one received no seal of promise unto life eternal; the other received no bread from heaven by which to live for ever: for life was found in neither: false-tongued and false-hearted participants in high and holy ceremonies; deriving nothing from them but deeper

and surer condemnation: signing and sealing their destruction: eating and drinking their own damnation.

It is an awful position: but it is more awful far to be deceived upon it. It is a fearful danger, every day gaining upon us, from the long-combatted influence of the great apostacy, that the Sacraments are distinct from other means of grace, in that they are life-giving ordinances. We have stated our firm conviction, that no such ordinance is or can be; neither by the regenerating power of the Spirit permanently vested in the font, nor the imperishable body of Christ commixed with the elements: neither contingently on the faith of the sponsor and the recipient, nor discretionary on the will and fitness of the administrator. What is it all but a multiplication of deities? the bread, the water, the priest, the communicant, and the godmother successively, invested with the sole attribute of Jehovah? A worse than heathen idolism: for heathens, with all their ten thousand gods, never ascribed to more than one the power of giving life. Whether the sacramental administration may be the *time* at which the new life is received from above, we do not contend. In the common character of ordinances, and means of grace, in which the Spirit may be or may not be acting at any given moment, we do not wish to prove them less availing than other means, than praying, reading, or hearing; but, in their distinctive character as sacraments, it seems an unlikely time: because they are especially ordained for the living in Christ, not for the dead in Adam; the impenitent and unbelieving being intentionally excluded from the administration: those very persons to whom, were it the especially appointed season of life-giving, they would seem most suitable. But, whether the sacraments may

be or may not be God's opportunity for the new creation in Christ Jesus, we have no promise of it attached to either of them. I read the thought arising in many a heart—perhaps secretly in every heart disposed to attach saving efficacy to the Sacrament,—'But are we dead? so very dead? need we more than restoratives, and may not these be sufficient? Are we not capable by nature, of repentance and faith, whereby we are competent to receive the benefits of baptism and the Lord's Supper, for continuance, not beginning of existence?' I have written of this at length, in another chapter. We know it is the turning point of all: the death of the soul is not believed—is not appreciated—is not realized. The swooned, the dormant, the insensible, the only half-dead, may be recovered by means, without ascribing to the means the attributes of God. The entire and absolute death of the soul in Adam, is the basis of evangelical truth: we warn those who do not mean to cede it, to beware how they hold it with a negligent hand.

Of the life-confirming, life-sustaining, life-invigorating influence of the Holy Sacraments, in the hands of the Spirit, I have no disposition to depreciate the value. The very fact of the benefits being limited to the household of faith, gives to them a separate and sacred character, distinguishing them from common ordinances. Content as I am with Infant Baptism, as constructively in full accordance with Holy Scripture, and certainly with the practice of the inspired apostles, I am hardly content that unconscious infancy should forestal the regenerate soul's appointed opportunity for public interchange of vows and seals and pledges, enjoyed in all the ardour of first love, by the baptized in the New Testament. I wish that believers all, as many as come to a

full age to know they have received the Holy Ghost, might have the opportunity that he had, who "*when he received sight*, forthwith arose and was baptized:" and he who, *when he believed* with all his heart, "went down into the water," and afterward "went on his way rejoicing;" or all they that, *having gladly received* the word of life, were baptized; three thousand admitted at once to the blessed communion of the saved, to eat "their bread with gladness and singleness of heart." Our church, and perhaps other churches, have provided for the adult believer this sacred opportunity of grace and love, of confession and consecration, in the ceremony of Confirmation; but it is, to a great extent, practically lost, by being performed as a matter of course, and at a given age, without reference to the previous reception of the Spirit in the heart; or any other qualification than that of sufficient age and instruction in religion. Faith and repentance can no more be commanded in fourteen years, than in as many days; and the baptismal vow is often publicly repeated with as little heart-owned purpose to keep it, as when it was made by proxy: and thus again the blessing falls to the ground—the outward and visible sign is without the inward and spiritual grace. If subsequently the indwelling Spirit move us to wish for an opportunity of publicly taking the name of Christ upon us, enlisting against the world, to which we have hitherto conformed ourselves, against the flesh in which we have walked, and the devil whose bondmen we have been; the gracious occasion does not remain for us, of which we are sure every adult convert in the New Testament availed himself, at the risk of whatever the name of Christ might expose him to. I do not wish baptism delayed—"Else were your children

unclean," says the Apostle, "but now are they holy:" separated from the profane community, and dedicated to God by their believing parents: so I understand the text,—a strong one, to my mind, in favour of Infant Baptism. The children of believers, like the vessels of the temple, or any other dedicated thing, acquired that manner of sanctification, which is reputed and dedicatory: they were reputed holy, and devoted to holy ends: though not necessarily thereupon changed in nature by sanctification of the indwelling Spirit. Too many such, alas! have at all times been thrown back into the common mass of unregenerate humanity, from which they never were in nature separate: as the wrought stones of Zion's holy temple have long since returned to undiscriminated dust. But is the dedication therefore useless—unnecessary? God does not think so, since He commands it: He does not intend to, since He accepts it. If of old time He would accept the house, or the field, that a willing vow would sanctify to him; or demanded the first-born of man and beast to be holy unto himself: why should He not accept, demand, and in some manner bless the dedication of infants in an ordinance of his own appointment, even though its spiritual engagements may be never ratified?

Still I do wish Confirmation were always made to wait the desires of a penitent, believing heart: and were always then performed, as a solemn annunciation before the church, of that heart's fixed intention to give up all for Christ. True, the Lord's Supper implies a similar confession; but we need too much, to have any thing to spare. Called of God in early youth, many an awakened but hesitating soul is known to have been fixed and established in the faith of Christ at Confirmation; many

more perhaps, who have lost half their days in halting between two opinions, or dishonoured by worldly compromise the opinions they adopted, with loss of much glory to God and happiness to themselves, might have been brought to a decision, and blest to more timely fruitfulness, if this ceremony were always what it is designed to be,—an occasion of public recognition and renewal of the baptismal vow; a vow never plighted by a penitent believing heart, without a corresponding blessing from above; of troth for troth, of love for love, of pledge for pledge exchanged; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Of the most blessed communion of the body and blood of Christ, I have so lately written my thoughts at large, in a separate publication,* that I do not intend to enter now upon it. What has been said of ordinances in general, and sacraments in particular, applies fully to the Communion as an outward and visible sign: that of which it is the sign, the pledge, the sweet assurance and most precious opportunity, is the subject of the following chapter; wherein this hallowed rite must necessarily be alluded to.

* The Table of our Lord. By the Author of 'The Listener in Oxford.'

CHAPTER XII.

IN OUR UNION AND COMMUNION WITH HIM.

We have already contemplated the first part of this "mystery of godliness"—not in its hidden depths, and heights unsearchable—but in the most practically simple form in which it was in our power to represent it. The easier part remains; yet still too difficult: and only easier, because it is, as it were a home secret: its hiding place is within us—"Christ in us:" nevertheless a mystery as impervious and impenetrable, save to the eye of faith, as that which is hidden in heaven, "with Christ in God." We have beheld in the union of Deity with humanity, in the person of our blessed Lord and Saviour, the sole value of the atonement: the sole power of salvation—the comprehensive mystery of the world's redemption; an atonement sufficient for the sin of all mankind; a salvation adequate to the perfect restoration of the lost; a redemption comprehending the entire law of God as made known to man; yet all resolved into the one great fact—"God manifest in the flesh:" Jesus, very God and very man. The remainder of the mystery is the individual, the actual, personal union of every believer with Christ, and the present and eternal communion and community consequent upon it. Was I wrong in calling it a "home secret?" Is it not that

intimate, internal verity, without which, whatever is, is nought to us, in the decision of our eternal destiny? And are we not self-loving, self-preserving creatures, to whom the momentous question after all must be—"What shall *I* do to be saved?" However worded and argued as a doctrine, I suppose it is by Christians undisputed as a fact, that salvation is not universal, insomuch as that all men are not saved; that every individual child of Adam is not recovered and restored to the lost image of his Maker. We have searched as far as we might, into this awful truth, this terrible fact; endeavouring to fill up with submission the void places of intelligence; with faith the broken links of understanding. What we have now to say pertains only to the saved: the actually saved; not the saved in the secret mind of the Eternal Trinity, nor the saveable by the all-sufficiency of the atonement; not those who are to be saved according to the eternal record of heaven's unread books; nor those who may be saved, according to the universal invitations of the Gospel: but the saved, whether in earth or heaven, by actual and individual incorporation into the body of Christ. The *name* of them is manifold in Holy Writ: we for our part have been very careful, and mean to be, never to call them by any other name than may be found there. Other appellations are come into use amongst us; we have noted the christening time, and suspect the sponsor: his design in it is manifest: but we deeply regret that some should be betrayed into the practice who do not participate in the design. We pursue the question no further, as to who are the engrafted branches of the vine; or how they came to be so; who is not, or who may not be, or who cannot be amongst them. We have given our thoughts

upon all these points in the preceding pages; our sole subject now is the actual condition of those who are "in Christ." As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us." What might condescending pity do, more than that Father has done, to place the mysterious truth within our ken: within reach, if not within compass of our understanding, our faith, and our affections, that we may embrace it, love it, live upon it! The strongest ties of this world's sociality—husband, brother, parent, friend—all have been used to designate the near fellowship of Jesus with his people, and all are insufficient. For these are impermanent bonds, wherein chilling unkindness often supervenes on love. Hard thoughts, cold sympathies, estranged desires, common contingencies of this world's fellowships, are impossible to him. "They may forget: yet will I not forget thee," saith our God. To this has been added the nearness of self-love to something of its own—a portion of itself: the vine's own branches; the head's own body;—can any thing be closer? Yes, for even these are severable; the feeble branch may be torn away, the diseased limb may be dispensed with, the suffering body may become its own loathsome burden. Whereas, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Insufficient images of that everlasting, inseverable oneness with the alone unchangeable! I think the closest comparison is that we just now postponed, and gratefully now recall: for it is our Saviour's own chosen figure: may we not say his favourite figure? He returned to it so often; and used it at the last; and left it a sign and a command for ever, to "shew forth his death till He comes." It is taken from the commonest, we may say the vulgarest of

earthly things, as we esteem them: the incorporation of food into the animal economy; becoming, as we know it does, an integral, essential part of the body into which it enters. "My body is meat indeed, my blood is drink indeed." Christ's imperishable humanity entering into our humanity, preserves our bodies and souls unto everlasting life, in like manner as our natural food enters into and preserves our natural life, by becoming an incorporate portion of the animal frame. Perishable that, it cannot save from perishing at last: no bread and wine can communicate what it has not; perpetuity of existence, to either body or soul: "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them." The comparison thus becomes a contrast, only serving to make closer the analogy, "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him:" not to be destroyed with the destructible, or to perish with the perishable, as the natural life with the emblematic elements: but contrariwise, "As the living Father has sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me shall live by me;" live in the ever-living—"A well of water, springing up to everlasting life." Can we not reach it? Can we not conceive it? Are we indeed so sensualized, so animalized, that we can make nothing of this mysterious imagery, unless we may put the substantiated body between our lips, and drink materially the precious blood? Are we altogether ignorant of an operation of the mind, taking into itself something adapted to its nature, so analagous to the operation of the body in eating and drinking, that no better description could possibly be given of the process? On the contrary, we are so fully cognizant of such a mental operation, it has become

the most common and familiar figure of rhetoric: and we speak of feasting upon such and such things; drinking in such and such delights; feeding upon this and that—when nothing but a mental operation is intended or supposed. Food for the mind is a vernacular expression, the most simple will not misconstrue into a bodily participation of those sources of knowledge, by means of which the mind is gratified and filled. Has the spiritual man, the immaterial soul, no sustenance adapted to its nature, its desires, and necessities, as bread to the body, and knowledge to the mind: that when such a sustentation is divinely spoken of as "Living bread that cometh down from heaven;" and we are told what it is, "I am the bread of life that cometh down from heaven,"—and how it is to be partaken of, we are driven to the gross conception of bodily eating and drinking, some manner of material incorporation, before we can exercise so much as our faith upon it? Ah! surely if it is so, it is because the soul's appetite is gone: has been gone so long, the desire and the provision have been forgotten together, till the very existence of either has become a mystery incomprehensible! "Speak to the earth and it shall teach thee; the fishes of the sea, they shall declare unto thee." The meanest thing that lives makes requisition for its food, and perceives its adaptation when he finds it: "Doth not the ear try words, and the mouth taste its meat," to aliment mind and body with their appropriate sustenance? But the soul, the fallen soul, has been so sick, so long, so deathly sick, "His life abhorreth meat, and his soul dainty meat." The poor perishing, denaturalized creature, has grown so stupid to the inanity of his spiritual death, that when life renewed renews the soul's

desires, he cannot so much as understand what manner of thing it hungers for: he does not know what is meant when it is said to him, "Take, eat, this is my body which was given for you." Oh! blessed Jesus, help us to this understanding. When Thou hadst meat to eat which the world knew not of, it was the Father who was in thee, and in whom thou wert—"I and my Father are one." If we have wherewith to stay our sinking, longing souls, it must be thou in us, and we in thee. "Give us evermore this bread." Nay, satisfy once—but once—our bewildered souls upon it, and the appetite will make no more mistakes about the food.

United thus, by faithful reception, to the humanity of Christ, as the body and its bread become incorporated by eating, what are the astounding, the amazing results? These are indeed enough to stagger and confound us. Necessary consequences as they seem, we could not have ventured upon them as inferences, were they not distinctly stated. Even now, we want courage to clothe in our own words our own belief; but we have words provided for us, and we could not use, because we could not find, any stronger language. "Because I live, ye shall live also." "The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them." "Hast loved them as thou hast loved me." "Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Can our humanity be less safe than His—less immortal than His? less loved, less pure, less blessed? I was going to say less glorious—we shall be less glorious, by so much as the head has a higher glory than the members: but participants still in all things. We think a soul is safe in heaven; why safe, where angels fell? Only because it is united to the eternal manhood of the Son of God, and cannot fall till He does. Then why not as safe on

earth? It is in life, not in death, we become united to him: in the beginning of the new life that He gives us. But while we are in the body, the body is mortal, and we may perish? Impossible!—Christ took into himself the whole humanity: the body will sleep a little while in the dust, as the living soul is entombed a little while in its clay; but the body of the believer can no more perish than his soul—"He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies." We know there is something falters the trembling sinner more than this, and shakes his faith, and bears his spirit down, when life and immortality seem sure to him. 'Am I, in spite of all my experience, my perception, my agonized consciousness of indwelling sin—am I one with Jesus in purity, in loveliness, in worth, and favour, and acceptance with the Father?' Yes: in the sight of Him who takes no count of time, and looks on things that are to be as if they were! He appoints to the soul, as to the body, a short waiting-time; the soul is but doing in this world what the body will be doing in the grave: getting rid of its impurities, its corruptibility, its dust of earth, and dross of earthliness. Or rather say, the Spirit is doing now for the one, what He will presently do for the other; changing the corruptible into incorruption—the loathsome into loveliness—the deformed into perfectness—the earthly into heavenly. If it seem not a thing incredible, that God should raise the dead—if we can believe that these racked and aching limbs, these dulled, disordered brains, and aged and worn-out frames, will come forth in beauty from the brief imprisonment of the tomb, whenever the resurrection-trumpet says "Arise;" why is it so hard to be assured, that our polluted prostrate souls, distracted and

tortured as they are with sin, shall quit their prison-house in spotless beauty too, whenever Christ's messenger shall say "Depart"—shall say to the soul, as the former to the body, "Arise: to my Father and your Father." I press this, because many an honest and believing heart is kept in doubt by still remaining sin: and some will scarcely bear to hear us say we are assured of salvation, while they know—alas! not so well as we know ourselves! what faults, and follies, and sins, are still abounding in us. This is not reasonable; and in that it keeps many a ransomed soul, many a renewed heart from peace, it is not pleasing to Him who would have us enter into his rest, and begin our heaven here. Salvation is sure, before it is completed. The work of Sanctification is a process; but so was the work of redemption a process. Christ finished it, but He took time. Is the Spirit's work less certain, because He too takes time? If saints of old could be saved in Christ, as we are sure they were, before He had accomplished his undertaking for them, cannot we be saved in Christ before the Spirit's undertaking is completed for us? Be sure—yes, we may be sure—and let the contrite and broken-hearted leap for joy—the Comforter can no more leave the heart where he has entered in life-giving power, before He has purified and brought it to perfection, than Christ could leave the world into which he entered, before He had finished the work the Father had given him to do. It is amazing truth: but the one part is no more wonderful than the other; and the actual finishing of the one, Christ crucified before our eyes, should help our faith to full assurance of the other. There is but one uncertainty in religion. Are we alive in Christ—born again of the Spirit? We have spoken of this

at length. Beyond this, uncertainty finds no place. It is the very master-piece of Satan's policy, to make us so easy about this, and so troubled about a thousand other things: to take our entrance on the heavenly path for granted, and go all our days in toil and terror, lest we never reach the issue: despoiled of our future heaven if we are wrong: despoiled of our present heaven if we are right.

Should we call it less than a present heaven, if we believed it? If we enjoyed it, as we might do, I am sure we should not. For are we not one with Him who is in heaven? I know there is a great deal of physical and mental infirmity, which, as well as the weakness of faith, and pressure of indwelling sin, interferes with the realization of our blessedness on earth. It is, at best, the day of small things: we must not be discouraged by our discouragements, nor cast down by our too many, and too great down-castings. Let us only be persuaded they are *ours*—our very own—saying always with the Psalmist, "This is mine infirmity." It will humble us more, but it will harm us less: it will throw the whole discredit on ourselves, and save the honour and the truth of God, in that He seems to give less than He has promised. We shall learn to bear our spiritual, as we bear our bodily infirmities—the suffering of a day—an hour—not worthy to be compared with the eternal weight of good preparing for us: and we shall learn beside to look with deep desire, instead of fear, to the moment when all infirmities shall be put off. But never let us turn with incredulous eyes and unbelieving hearts, from the contemplation of the actual, present, unalienable privileges of the members of Christ's body upon earth. We rate them too low, we think of them too little; we despair of them too much; or with all admitted obstacles

and infirmities, we should taste of and enjoy them more.

The blessedness of this mysterious union, in one particular, might be learned, even by the lost nature that never did, and never can enjoy it; in the destitution of all hearts without it. There is a faculty—does not every child of earth at some time discover that there is? to which nothing in this world corresponds: a taste for which there is not responding gratification: an appetite for which there is no aliment: a desire that never finds or knows its object. The want of sympathy is an anomaly in God's universe. Every other want, from the grossest animal instinct, to the highest intellectual capability, has a corresponding satisfaction at some time attainable. This only, this want of our very nature, which every heart knows, which feeling hearts ache for, which some deep-stricken and too sensitive hearts have even broken for, is a nonentity—a fiction an idea—gaining reality and substantiality only by what we suffer in the privation. We have the name: but it defines nothing earthly save our destitution. In early life we talk about sympathy: wait for it, expect it. Laden with blessings, compassed with delights, and nothing interfering to interrupt and spoil them, young hearts become restless in their very plentitude for want of participation. Give us a friend, a brother, a husband—another self, to share our thoughts and feelings—we want sympathy—we want to be 'understood,' as it is commonly expressed. Alas! while growing years increase the need: and cares and sorrows and sins, an ever accumulating load, cry out for participation too, suspicion grows slowly that we shall never find it: till late conviction comes that there is no such thing. Kindness is not it; love is not it; Alas! the fondest

affection brings the bitterest disappointment: the acutest sense of unappreciated, unparticipated feeling. Familiar expressions are often the truest interpreters of the heart. 'No one can understand my case, my grief, my joy, my suffering, my delight, but those who have felt it. How commonly we say this: yet it involves the whole secret of our want of sympathy: it is not want of will—but want of power to enter into participation with another mind. All must be felt, and felt with our own feelings, before it can be appreciated: it must be viewed from within, not from without, before it can be understood: we must have another, an indwelling self, before this strange demand of our nature can be satisfied. Is there a friend that sticketh closer than a brother? nearer, more intimate than friend or husband? Deity, it is manifest, could never fill the void: the distance is too great: and where could angelic essence learn participation in the joys and sorrows of the flesh? There is but One: nearer than the nearest because He dwells within us: moved with the feeling of our infirmities, because He has been tempted even as we are: competent to understand us, because He knoweth all things. In Jesus, Son of God and Son of Man,—Emmanuel, God with us, and God in us, the believer first finds this want of his nature satisfied: there is one who knows all, feels all, understands all, shares all—"In all their afflictions He was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them." The nameless wish—the unallowed emotion—the unbreathed sigh—the almost unfelt feeling, of every heart in which Christ is formed, has a witness—one who understands, appreciates, and participates. Is it not what we want? what we have been wanting all our days? what all humanity seeks

but cannot find, and would, but cannot give? Another self, a more than self: for Jesus understands our hearts much better than ever we do. We do not always know our sorrows from our sins: needlessly condemn, or dangerously excuse ourselves; reproach ourselves with what is unavoidable, or bewail ourselves for what should be avoided. The greatest relief a troubled spirit knows, is the appeal to Jesus from itself: "Search me, and know me"—a puzzle, a riddle, and a wonder to myself.

This indwelling fellowship, this sympathetic identity of being between the Head in heaven and his members upon earth, is not a mere abstract truth submitted to our faith, which is never to be experimentally made proof of in the flesh. The body knows when it is fed: the mind knows when it is filled: do we think the soul does not know when it takes the living bread of communion with the Lord, and draws out of his fulness what it hungers for? The actual converse of the soul with our beloved, of Jesus with his beloved, may baffle words and be no thing to talk about: but it is a proved reality, as presently satisfying to the soul, as food to the body, or knowledge to the mind: and never till his fulness be itself exhausted, and the source of life dried up, can the soul that is united to him perish for lack of sustenance. It is not limited to times, and places, and conditions: it is simply limited to 'faith.' There may be seasons peculiarly appointed and blessed to this communion: the Lord's Table for instance: the opportunity as well as symbol of community—the very tristing-place of love; whither the brethren come to sit at meat by special invitation from the Lord. This should be a time of very close and favourable intercourse: I believe we cannot expect too much there: not from it, but in it. I believe the

soul often does at the table eat and eat again of that "meat indeed" which having once partaken of, it can never die; can no more perish than He can whom it feeds on. And not only eats, but tastes: not only partakes, but knows that it partakes of bread from heaven, and goes thence on its way replenished. But if there be special seasons and places of acceptance, there are no seasons of denial: no places of prohibition; save those that sin may make so: not sin abhorred, conflicted with, lamented—these are the very occasions of sympathetic converse: but sin indulged, permitted, played with. It is commonly thought that times of sickness and affliction are the most favourable for this heavenly intercourse. It may be at such seasons the slow unwilling heart is driven by its necessities most earnestly to seek it: but it is not then that faith is liveliest, and the free heart most awake to the glad enjoyment. Health is the wonted time of appetite, light-heartedness of feasting. I cannot say: there is provision for all times. But God is a jealous God—and Christ's is a jealous love. It is not when the heart is pre-occupied with even lawful things, things good or evil of the present life; engrossing sorrows, cares, or joys of time; that this most blessed communion can be realized. When Jesus would hold communion with his Father, he rose before it was day, and went into a desert place: I should think they know most of this enjoyment, who are most alone with God; by hours secluded, or by thoughts abstracted from the tumult and hurry of this world's interests and occupations.

It is thought that those who love, grow like by loving: the gradual assimilation of contiguous things is a law of nature, fraught with no small danger in an evil

world. Adam's children, born first in Adam's likeness, by long familiarity with evil, and contiguity of the evil one, grow into a worse likeness; the grosser resemblance of one who is their father, and whose works they do. United to Christ, it cannot be but we must grow into assimilation with Him. It is against all nature that it should not be so, even without the intervention of divine power to effect it. "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." The Apostle draws the inference: they cannot remain in dissimilitude, in contrast: they must grow into one love, one fear, one choice, one habitude of judgment, taste, and feeling: a mental assimilation out of which will grow in time a similarity of feature, an external likeness—a habitude of acting, talking, living: till the union which began in contrast, the holy with the unholy, the risen with the fallen, the heavenly with the earthly, ends in perfect and entire conformity. From the first moment of our union with Christ, our minds become like his mind—"We have the mind of Christ:" our will is his will: our choice his choice: our purpose his purpose: our law his law: our rule of life his own blessed word and example. "We know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He has given us." Ere we depart hence our souls too become like him—our sinful, polluted, and imperfect souls, are brought into entire conformity with his; most pure, most holy, most immaculate. When our Lord returns, the likeness will be completed; our bodies too—our vile bodies—shall be made like unto his glorious body: When He comes "we shall be like him"—in body, soul, and spirit.

There is a community of being upon earth, resulting from the believer's unity with Christ, the communion

of saints, the nearest of all unions save that in which it originates—of which we should say something. It has become a sad subject: and that which should be our comfort and rejoicing, has become indeed our misery and our shame. Not only do Christians now find difficulty, as by reason of imperfection and insincerity they always must, in discerning where the fraternal lineaments are truly traced; they seem no longer to know these lineaments when they see them. The question is not where they are, but what they are. Brethren, members of one body, parts of one whole, are in search of each other, without knowing what they are looking for. Is the pattern gone? Is the original destroyed? Are the revealed characters so utterly effaced, that we must cast new type before we can discover what is moulded to its semblance? It would seem so: and I am sure if that must be, it is little matter what name we call it by when we have made it. If the body of Christ be anything but that which the Holy Spirit describes, exhibits and creates, the members of it may own what names, or wear what colours they please: each one will have an equal right to say of another—'Thou art not of the body, thou hast not the true features of our cast.' But if the type unchangeable remains: if the divine original stands permanently exhibited in the Gospel—if God has told us, and shown us, and sworn to us, what He is who has united all in one, and what they are who are knit together in him: we are but pursuing shadows: bandying words. No names of community by which Christians may bind themselves together, however significant of other peculiarities, can designate a living member of Christ's mystical body: no names of separation by which we may cast off and exclude

each other, however else dishonourable, can disunite one living member from the eternal head with which he is one in the Spirit; nor from "the Church which is his body." Man can undo no more than he can do. He may set up one church and pull down another; he may establish a ritual to-day, and alter it to-morrow, and abrogate it next day; he may unite in Irvingism this year, and next year in Tractarianism, and the third in Popery, leading thousands of others in his train. But forasmuch as all human words and deeds, and plans and contrivances, cannot unite a dead branch to the life-giving stem, so neither can all names and powers and authorities united, sever a living one that abides in Jesus.

If he that cannot make the fig-tree to bear thorns, nor the thistle to bring forth grapes, will say to the vine, 'Thou art a thistle,' or to the thistle, 'Thou art a fig-tree:' he does nothing but confuse himself, or please himself, by the miscalling of their names: incompetent to change a single character, or confound any one difference by which they are distinguishable. All names, and forms, and peculiarities of human institution, have been designed in fact for separation, not for union: for exclusion rather than comprehension. They have their meaning and their uses; but we must forego them and forget them, when we speak of the communion of saints: one with Christ, and therefore with each other: members of the same body: branches of the same olive-tree: lively stones of the same temple; bride of one husband —children of one Father—brethren of one household.

Worldly men talk—they like to talk contemptuously of a 'party' in religion. A party! That is a poor word to designate the closeness, the unitedness, the oneness, of believers in Jesus with each other, as it is set forth in

the Holy Scriptures. St. Paul, in writing to the Corinthians has a remarkable expression: speaking of the communion of the body and blood of Christ: he says, "We being many are *one bread*:" and he adds, "For we are all partakers of that one bread." That same spiritual feeding which makes of the believer one body and one soul with the humanity of his risen Lord, figuratively "one bread:" makes of the faithful participants, being many, one bread also: makes us in the participation the very thing we come together to partake of. It would be hard to say how there can be too much sympathy, too much love, too much assimilation and affinity of heart and mind in a body corporate like this. Would that the world's thoughtless charge were a hundred-fold more true: for it is the very test of membership that God has fixed upon. "By this we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." It is so unnatural, so impossible, that persons united together for eternity in such a bond, should not be dear to each other as they are to Christ, it may well be assumed, that where the attachment is not felt, the fact is not believed. We submit this very seriously to some who talk idly about professors of religion; who tell us they like religion, but they do not like religious people; they like the doctrines of the Gospel, but they do not like 'the party' that receive and live by them. Such persons are in great danger of deceiving themselves; for it is written, "He that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth;" evidently with reference to the brotherhood of Christ. If it is a false professor, a hypocrite they do not like, neither would they were he of any other 'party' or profession: and he is, in fact, really of none. If

it be an infirm, imperfect, unattractive member they do not like, let them know Christ does not love deformity, infirmity, and imperfection, any better than we do: more adverse far, and more revolting to his nature than to ours: but He does love, as his own soul, as the apple of his eye, the very weakest member of his mystical body—"The least of these little ones that believeth in me:" He loved them in unloveliness; chose them in unworthiness; married them to himself in all their unsightliness; naked, diseased, unclean: and now beholds them, as He has presented them to his Father, "Perfect in his comeliness that he has put upon them." Are we so little of Jesus's mind as to say we do not like the special objects of his love: do not like his choice—his purchase, his own peculiar portion? This would be an anomaly too strange for belief if God had not decided it. But he has decided it; for it is written, "He that loveth not his brother, abideth in death:" he that loves not with a brother's love—with the brother's, the elder brother's love; gratuitous, unmerited:—and for the same reason, for his own name's sake. "Marvel not, brethren, if the world hate you." The natural man believes nothing about a brotherhood in Christ; and, if he did, could have no union with the members, while He has none with their head. It is no marvel, but a necessity of nature. "The world will love its own"—Christ loves his own—and we shall love *our own*, whichever 'party' it be. There should be but one contingency in our fraternal preference: whether he that is called a brother be indeed in Christ, and thence comprehended in that "new commandment," which was not like the old one, a law of universal benevolence: but such a law as Jesus had bound himself by: "That ye love one another as I have loved you,"

and pledged his Father to: "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them." Till we so love the brethren, we shall be short indeed of the enjoyment intended for us in communion with each other. We wait in hope: for it is not so now.

Shall we do well to look on? to form an imagination —to draw a picture of what will be the manner of our union with the Beloved hereafter? Perhaps not. The foretaste may give us some idea of the banquet, when we shall drink of the wine new with him in his heavenly kingdom, as He now drinks it new with us in his earthly kingdom. Except what we derive from these small beginnings of the feast, our ideas of an hereafter are mostly negative; consisting mainly in the absence of all that interrupts or embitters our communion here; the removal of all that interferes with or delays our full participation of the promised bliss. We call heaven a place of rest, because we are overladen, and over-wearied here; we call it a place of holiness, because the sense of sin spoils all the joys we know, and the commission of it is the source of all the griefs we suffer. These are correct, but insufficient notions; and we must wait for more. "To live is Christ" now; nevertheless, "to die is gain:"—beyond this there is a time of more gain—to wit, the redemption of the body—the resurrection from the dead. Whether this be the last change, or intermediate to the final judgment, is held uncertain. Quite certain it is, we know very little of any one of these conditions, because very little is revealed respecting them. Those who anticipate a reign of Christ on earth, are in danger of thinking too carnally, and talking too mundanely about it; making the spiritual kingdom up of earthly and

sensible images of delight; as if that which is transacted on the earth or in contact with it, must needs be of it, and bear more or less resemblance to the life of flesh and blood, of which only we are cognizant below. Those on the other hand who will hear of nothing but heaven, are exposed to an opposite evil: vague dreams of something so unreal, so untangible, and incomprehensible, faith only can lay hold of whatever enjoyment may be in it; for neither hope nor love, and still less anticipation, can give it a form or being of delight. I am persuaded either notion thus embodied is very far off from the reality. I do not know where the paradise is now, of the soul that has departed to be with Christ; I do not know where the Jerusalem will be of the risen saints, when they shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years; neither do I know where the heaven will be where saints and angels stand through all eternity together before the Father's throne. I believe these divers appellations designate divers states of entire but increasing happiness, with which the locality has very little to do in fact, though such there must be. If Scripture says that one or all of them shall be upon the earth, I know not why we should insist on its being in heaven: unless we should say where heaven is, or what is meant by it. Some persons take it very ill that we should speak of bringing back to earth the soul that is gone to heaven: but I do not think they know where it is gone: or if it be *gone* at all. It is with Christ, in a manner which while living it was not; In a maturity and perfection of the new life so weakly begun in the flesh, and consummated in the putting of it off. But whereas we read of only one new creation of the immaterial, all else is but an advancement and perpetuity of the same existence.

This old created earth does not well suit the new-created soul while progressing in newness of life upon it: much less when brought to the fulness of its stature in Christ: and therefore for a season it is kept apart. But "behold, I make all things new," saith the Lord. When the material world is new-created—"new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness," we cannot say it may not suit us then; and the emancipated soul reunited to its spiritualized body, finds a spiritual happiness in it suited to its new nature: waiting, if it should be so, some further change, when "the thousand years are finished." I perceive how Christians may form a different judgment of the import of this prophetic language: but I cannot see why they should have a preference about it: considering how little notion we have of the future state at all. One thing to me seems certain. Death—the believer's death—makes an end of death, and nothing else: it terminates no life: else why is it written, "He that believeth on me shall never die?' It makes not so much as a chasm in the new existence to which we are born again of the Spirit; severs not a link of our eternal life in Jesus: destroys not a faculty of the renewed, recovered manhood, created at first for holiness and bliss: does nothing, in short, but disencumber the living soul from the body of that death it is for a season bound to, waiting its own progressive sanctification. When Jesus died, what died? Nothing of humanity but its death—its sin, its misery. Not one faculty, not one power or character of his pure and spotless manhood was subtracted from it in the grave: and whatever was superadded of power and glory and capacity, when he took humanity to heaven, I am persuaded he destroyed

nothing in it that came originally of the Father: left nothing behind but what men and devils had superadded to his first workmanship. The nearest likelihood therefore of what we shall be, must be found in what we are at our best moments; our moments of conscious intercourse, and nearest assimilation to the mind of Christ; of closest union and communion with Him; of self-forgetfulness and absorption in Him; moments rare and yet real, which time, and place, and circumstances affect not; and sin, and sorrow, and self-will invade not; when all consciousness is absorbed by present delight in the law of God in Christ, and the sensible perception of his full sympathy, sufficiency, and love. "My beloved is mine, and I am his." One brief bright moment such as this, will give us more idea of what our future felicity perhaps may be, than all we can say of earthly milleniums, or of mansions in heaven. I do not think there ever intermixes with the forethinking of such hours as these, an impression of natural affections cut off and disappointed; intellectual faculties worn out and wasted; feelings that never found their objects, or outlived them; tastes sick of hunger first, and then of food; the strange disorder of faculties inadequate to their uses, and uses inadequate to satisfy our faculties. Is it not true rather, that at such moments every power and capacity of manhood feels its immortality, and anticipates at once its own increase and satisfaction; the full fruition of capabilities enlarged—perhaps eternally enlarging. These feelings reveal secrets, to which words are incompetent; because immediately that we begin to talk of heavenly places, delights, and occupations, we make them too sensual or too ideal: too like the things our mortal na-

ture loves, or too unlike to any thing our nature is capable of loving. But of such bright exalted moments, the joys are foretastes—the feelings are pledges—the expectations are promises.—I think we may trust them all.

FINIS.